

Clubfoot and the Ponseti Method: Exercises for the older child

This leaflet is for children diagnosed with clubfoot who have had the Ponseti method of casting, and are using their boots and bar at night but are now standing and/walking. It explains the exercises that should be performed to keep the feet/foot flexible. This leaflet should be issued under guidance of a paediatric physiotherapist.

General advice

These exercises should be performed daily. If you notice that your child's foot is becoming stiff or regressing towards the original clubfoot appearance, perform these stretches three or four times a day and call to make a clinic appointment as soon as possible.

Stretching the Achilles tendon

With your child's knee straight, cup your child's heel in the palm of your hand. Pull down on the heel as you use your other hand to push up on the mid-foot (be carefully not to push up on the toes).

Hold the position for 10 to 20 seconds and repeat 5 times.



Play in the squatted position

Once your child is walking, encourage him or her to play in a squatted position with both heels flat on the floor. This position stretches the calf muscles and keeps the ankles and feet flexible. As your child becomes older, encourage him or her to jump like a frog, walk like a bear, and waddle like a duck!



Strengthening the muscles

As your child grows, it is very important to strengthen the muscles that pull the foot out and up. Help to activate these muscles by placing your finger by the outer edge of the foot and asking your child to use his or her toes to touch the finger.

Alternative exercises

Another way to strengthen the muscles is to play in a sandbox or a plastic tub with the bottom full of sand. Have your child sit with his or her heel down in the sand and then use the foot to sweep the sand outwards. Your child can use this motion to build mountains of sand and then stomp through them afterwards!



Using the foot to draw pictures in the sand is also fun. Your child can make pictures of rainbows by using a windshield-wiper action and big outward movements of the foot. Ask your child to try to keep the heel down in the sand while performing these movements.

As your child becomes older, he or she can perform other strengthening exercises, such as walking on the heels and walking on the inside borders of the feet. When your child learns the alphabet, ask him or her to use the foot to draw letters in the air!



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Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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