

Fact Sheet: Positional Talipes calcaneovalgus exercises

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What is Positional Talipes?

This is a condition where baby's ankle and foot (talipes means ankle and foot) are abnormally turned but flexible, meaning that it can easily and gently be moved into the normal position. This condition:

- is thought to be caused by baby's position in the womb with the baby not being able to move their feet enough
- occurs commonly - about 1.5% of babies are born with this condition
- positional talipes is easy to treat and will not affect your baby's walking later-on

Talipes Calcaneovalgus

Baby's foot is pushed upwards and turns outwards. The muscles at the front of baby's foot and ankle are tight.



What is the treatment?

You and your baby have been referred to a paediatric physiotherapist (therapist who has in special interest and skills in treatment of children and babies). Below are outlined some simple measures and exercises to ensure your baby's foot develops normally.

Please check with your physiotherapist **BEFORE** doing any foot exercises to make sure they are suitable, and you are performing them correctly.

All exercises should be done when your baby is relaxed and not crying. The movements should **NEVER** cause pain.

Exercises to stretch the tightened muscles:

Hold baby's lower leg with one hand. Use your other hand to gently point the toes down away from the shin in line with the leg or a little inwards.

The stretch should be held for 10-15 seconds and should be done three times with each nappy change.



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Massage

Massaging around your baby's ankles, especially over the muscles and skin that are a little tight on the front of baby's foot/ankle will be helpful.

Stimulating active movement

Pressure on the ball of the foot or behind the ankle may stimulate the baby to point their toes.

Your physiotherapist will advise you on follow up check-ups as your baby needs them.

Basic advice includes:

- Allowing your baby lots of time to kick and move their feet and legs freely without tight clothing
- Avoiding tight shoes and baby-gros which fit too snugly. Wrap baby loosely around their feet

Your physiotherapist will advise you on follow up check-ups if your baby needs them.

Positional talipes is a common condition of newborn babies and with very simple measures it should resolve. It will not cause long term harm to your child's walking or running. If you have any concerns or questions, please speak with our staff.

We welcome further feedback on this brochure as a way on continually improving our service.

Send your feedback to:

wslhd-wmdwnhwebsite@health.nsw.gov.au

