



**West Hertfordshire
Teaching Hospitals**
NHS Trust



A guide to...

Physiotherapy advice for Positional Talipes Calcaneovalgus

Patient Information

If you need this leaflet in another language,
large print, Braille or audio version, please call
01923 217187 or email westherts.pals@nhs.net



What is Positional Talipes?

Positional talipes is a common foot condition for new born babies. The baby's foot/feet can be turned inwards and downwards (equinovarus), or outwards and upwards (calcaneovalgus) in a resting positioning, but remains flexible. This means that the foot can easily be moved into a normal position and through a full range of normal movement. It may effect one or both feet. It is thought to occur due to the baby's positioning in the mother's uterus.

A health professional can examine your baby's feet to exclude any structural foot deformities which would require further treatment.

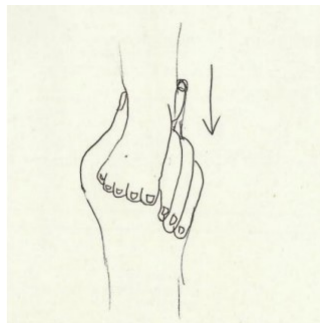
Positioning talipes is correctible and the foot position usually resolves by itself over a few months. Once the baby is born, they have more space to move and stretch their feet. Positional talipes should not impact on the development of the baby. The following exercises and advice can help to improve the outcome.

Exercises for Positional Talipes

Gentle exercises to the foot will help it come around into the normal position. It is important to do them three times a day and are most effective when your baby is relaxed - after each nappy change or after bath time are often good times to remember.

Stretching

1. **Plantarflexion stretch:** Use one hand to support your baby's calf. With your other hand hold the sides of the foot with your thumb and index finger. Gently move your babies' foot to the middle, bringing it in line with their shin, then move your babies' foot downwards in the opposite to the direction of the shin. Hold the stretch for approximately 10 seconds, repeating three times.



N.B: Exercises should be carried out whilst your baby is relaxed and should never be forced or painful. Continue these stretches for a few months, or until the foot position has return to normal.

General advice

- Allow your baby lots of time to freely kick. In the bath or at changing time when the nappy is not restricting them can be useful.
- You can try massaging your baby's feet with your choice of oil cream to prevent dry skin and to help relax and stretch the muscles. The International Association of Infant Massage recommends the use of unscented vegetable oil, preferably organic and cold pressed.
- Avoid tight babygrows so that there is plenty of room for your baby to stretch their legs and feet.
- Avoid wearing baby shoes and tight socks.

Follow up

The foot position will usually correct to a normal position after two or three months.

Please speak to your health visitor or GP if:

- Your baby's foot feels stiff, or you are unable to correct the position
- Your baby's foot seems painful. Your baby's foot position has not improved or resolved within a couple of months.

Your GP or health visitor can refer your baby for further assessment and advice if required.

Babies with positional talipes are not routinely referred for a hip ultrasound. Please speak to your health visitor or GP if you have any concerns about your baby's hips.

If you are unsure about any advice or information, please contact your GP, health visitor or contact the Physiotherapy department using the below contact details.

How to contact us

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