



West Hertfordshire
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Trust



A guide to...

**Physiotherapy Advice for
Positional Talipes
Equinovarus**

Patient Information

What is Positional Talipes?

Positional talipes is quite a common foot condition in newborn babies. The foot can be turned inwards and downwards (equinovarus), or outwards and upwards (calcaneovalgus) in a resting position, 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 affect one or both feet. It is thought to occur due to the baby's position in the mother's uterus.

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

Positional talipes is correctable 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.

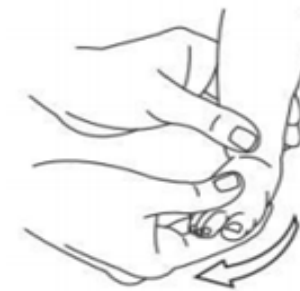
Exercises

Gentle exercises to the foot will help it to come around into a 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 when a baby is relaxed after bath time are often good times to remember.

1. **Dorsiflexion stretch:** gently lift the foot up towards the shin. Hold each stretch for 10 seconds and repeat three times.



2. **Eversion stretch:** taking the foot out to the side. Hold each stretch for 10 seconds and repeat three times.



3. **Muscle stimulation:** stroke the outside of your baby's foot from toe up the leg to encourage them to move it up and outwards to a neutral position. Repeat this 5-10 times.



NB: 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 back to a normal position by two to 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

Physiotherapy Department
Watford General Hospital
West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust
Vicarage Road, Watford, Hertfordshire WD18 0HB

Tel: 01923 217271

Email: westherts.paedsphysio@nhs.net

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



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