

Flatfoot in Adults



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Flatfoot: A Common—and Varied—Condition

- Several types of flatfoot
- Symptoms and problems vary
- One common characteristic: partial or total loss of the arch
 - Partial collapse of arch: when standing, walking
 - Total collapse of arch: when sitting, standing, walking



Other Possible Characteristics of Flatfoot

- Toe drift
- Can lead to or worsen other foot conditions
 - Plantar fasciitis
 - Bunions
 - Hammertoes



Flexible Flatfoot

- Loss of arch only when standing or walking
- Arch returns when sitting
- Usually begins in childhood, continues into adulthood
- Often progresses in severity during adulthood
- Usually in both feet
- Often inherited



What Happens When Flexible Flatfoot Progresses?

- Tendons and ligaments of the arch
 - Stretch and tear
 - Become inflamed
- Further deterioration of the arch



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Symptoms of Flexible Flatfoot

- Pain in heel, arch, ankle or along outside of foot
- Rolled-in ankle (overpronation)
- Shin splint
- Aching or fatigue in foot or leg
- Pain in lower back, hip or knee



When to Seek Help

- Seek help early on—even if you have no symptoms
- Your foot and ankle surgeon can advise you
- Preventive measures can help avoid future problems



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Diagnosing Flatfoot

- Your foot and ankle surgeon examines your feet
- Observes your feet with sitting and standing
- X-rays are likely



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Treatment: Targeted to Your Case

- If no symptoms
 - Education on what to do
- If have symptoms
 - Early treatment may resolve symptoms without surgery
 - Early treatment may slow down the progression



Conservative Treatment of Flatfoot: Nonsurgical Options

- Activity modifications
- Shoe modifications
- Weight loss
- Orthotic devices
- Immobilization
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
- Physical therapy
- Ankle-foot orthosis (AFO)



General Nonsurgical Strategies

- Activity modifications
 - Cut down on activities that bring pain
- Shoe modifications
 - Wear shoes that support the arches
- Weight loss
 - Lose weight if you are overweight



Other Effective Nonsurgical Options

- Orthotics
 - Custom-made or over-the-counter shoe inserts
- Immobilization
 - Walking boot or avoid weightbearing entirely
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
 - Ibuprofen, etc.
- Physical therapy
 - Exercises, etc.
- Ankle-foot orthosis (AFO)
 - Brace that supports the arch



Surgical Treatment of Flatfoot

- May be needed if conservative treatment fails
- Various surgical techniques are available
- Goals of surgery
 - Decrease pain
 - Improve function
 - Correct the misalignment



Other Types of Flatfoot

- Posterior tibial tendon dysfunction (PTTD)
 - Usually develops in adulthood
 - Progresses, especially if not treated early
- Get a proper evaluation and diagnosis of your flatfoot condition



See a Foot and Ankle Surgeon
Today to Minimize Future
Problems

(Place DPM's contact info here)



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