

TOE WALKING

Toe walking is when a child walks on their toes, or on the ball of their foot, without the heel coming in contact with the floor. It is not a typical gait.

Toe walking can have a negative impact on gross motor development and may be a sign of other underlying conditions.



WHAT CAN CAUSE TOE WALKING?

A Poor Vestibular System

The vestibular system is in the inner ear and responsible for providing the brain with information on movement and position of the body. When this system is not functioning well, it does not provide the brain with the correct information and therefore may not be aware that the feet are not walking in a typical pattern

Sensory Processing

If a child is sensitive to touch, placing their heels on the floor may be overwhelming and uncomfortable. To avoid feeling uncomfortable, they may walk on their toes. Typically these children will show aversions to other tactile input such as socks and shoes

Habit

If a child has spent some time walking on their toes, they may continue to do so out of habit, and that it is familiar

TREATMENT

A child who presents with toe walking may require further care from a specialist. If left untreated, toe walking can lead to:

- o Limited or no ability to jump
- o Decreased balance and movement
 - o Difficulty using stairs
 - o Difficulty stopping from a run

Early identification and intervention can help prevent the need for more invasive treatments. Prolonged toe walking can result in shortening of the calf muscles and heel cord (Achilles tendon)

While toe walking may resolve on its own, it is beneficial to discuss appropriate intervention strategies with an occupational therapist and/or physiotherapist as soon as it is observed.

Allied Therapy • www.alliedtherapy.ca • 902-580-1060