

Do you have Flat Feet and Consistently Experience Foot Pain?



by Eunice Ramsey-Parker, DPM, MPH Clinic Administrator, Foot Center of New York

flat feet (also called fallen arches).

In a normal foot, several tendons anchored in the foot and the lower leg pull in combination to form the arch. But about a quarter of all adults have little or no arch. Though children are born with flat feet, or flexible flat feet as they are known, usually an arch forms between the ages of three and five. The lack of an arch can also be caused by some health conditions (rheumatoid arthritis, obesity, diabetes, and pregnan-

cy), broken bones, or damage to the tendons in your foot, causing a collapsed arch.

It's a fairly common problem. But, if you have flat feet and consistently experience foot pain, if your feet or ankles are tired or achy, or if you often feel chronic discomfort in your hips, legs, lower back or knees, you should have your feet evaluated by a podiatrist. Why? Because your feet support your entire body, and flat feet can throw your skeleton out of its prop-

er alignment and cause joint problems as well. The strain on your skeleton and joints caused by flat feet can cause the above symptoms, as well as bunions, hammertoes, plantar fasciitis (heel pain) and other foot issues.

Flat feet will not go away on their own. A podiatrist can analyze your foot structure and your gait (how you walk), and can recommend corrective and therapeutic measures, from custom insoles (orthotics) that will help align and sup-

port your foot, to medications to reduce inflammation, to exercises to strengthen the tendons in your feet, including the Achilles tendon. Surgical solutions are only recommended for severe cases.

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Have you ever seen your footprints in the sand or on a wet surface, and noticed that your feet are flat – that you can see a complete impression of the bottoms of your feet with no arch in the middle of the inside of the foot? You probably have

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