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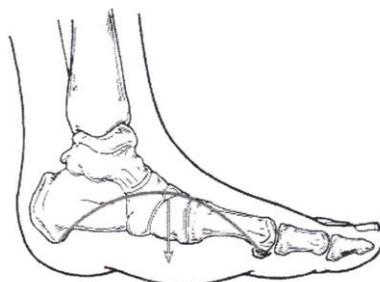
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Flexible Flatfoot

Flatfoot is often a complex disorder, with diverse symptoms and varying degrees of deformity and disability. There are several types of flatfoot, all of which have one characteristic in common partial or total collapse (loss) of the arch.

Flexible Flatfoot. Flexible flatfoot is one of the most common types of flatfoot. It typically begins in childhood or adolescence and continues into adulthood. It usually occurs in both feet and generally progresses in severity throughout the adult years. As the deformity worsens, the soft tissues (tendons and ligaments) of the arch may stretch or tear and can become inflamed.

The term "flexible" means that while the foot is flat when standing (weight-bearing), the arch returns when not standing. In the early stages of flexible flatfoot arthritis is not restricting motion of the arch and foot, but in the later stages arthritis may develop to such a point that the arch and foot become stiff.



Flat Foot



Normal Foot

Treatment Options

Activity modifications. Cut down on activities that bring you pain and avoid prolonged walking and standing to give your arches a rest.

Weight loss. If you are overweight, try to lose weight. Putting too much weight on your arches may aggravate your symptoms.

Orthotic devices. Your foot and ankle surgeon can provide you with custom orthotic devices for your shoes to give more support to the arches.

Immobilization. In some cases, it may be necessary to use a walking cast or to completely avoid weight-bearing.

Medications. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, help reduce pain and inflammation.

Physical therapy. Ultrasound therapy or other physical therapy modalities may be used to provide temporary relief.

Shoe modifications. Wearing shoes that support the arches is important for anyone who has flatfoot.

Flatfoot Surgery

A variety of surgical techniques is available to correct flexible flatfoot. Your case may require one procedure or a combination of procedures. All of these surgical techniques are aimed at relieving the symptoms and improving foot function. Among these procedures are tendon transfers or tendon lengthening procedures, realignment of one or more bones, joint fusions, or insertion of implant devices.

