

Having flat feet doesn't mean you need medical treatment, but it may put you at a higher risk of pains or problems.

Having noticeably flat feet raises alarm bells for many people as flat feet are often linked to foot pain and lower limb problems in podiatry. While this is true for some people, we're pleased to say that others with flat feet can go through their lives without ever experiencing any pain or other problems with their feet.

Here at Masterton Foot Clinic, when it comes to flat feet, we tend to employ the rule of "if it's not broken, let's not go fixing it" – simply meaning that if your body is managing your flat feet well on its own, then this is great, and medical treatments usually aren't justified.



If your flat feet are accompanied by pains, end-of-day aches or other problems like poor balance or regular tripping or being unable to keep up with your peers when running due to muscle fatigue, then it is highly likely that we will recommend treatment.

As flat feet are known to cause or be contributing factors to various foot and leg problems, treating the cause can help relieve your painful symptoms and prevent the pain or injury from recurring in the future. Here, we will create a treatment plan for the pain or problem you're experiencing with your flat feet being managed as a causal factor, while also managing your other symptoms.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ARE FLAT FEET BAD?

No, flat feet on their own are not bad. The only 'bad' thing is when you're getting pain or other symptoms, and your flat feet have helped cause this problem. *Think of it this way:* flat feet roll further towards the ground than 'normal' arched feet. This means that the muscles and ligaments involved with rolling your feet down and then lifting them up, work harder for longer. Working harder 10,000 times per day makes you more likely to overuse and damage one of these structures, hence developing foot pain.

WHY DO I HAVE FLAT FEET? DID I CAUSE THEM?

No, you almost certainly haven't caused your flat feet. For most people, their flat feet are linked to characteristics like the shape and structure of their bones, the flexibility of their ligaments and tissues, and other similar factors that their DNA determines.

Other causes include injuries to the feet or ankles, medical conditions like Charcot foot or arthritis that change the structure of the feet, having conditions that affect the flexibility or strength of the muscles and ligaments supporting the arch, and more.

HOW CAN I DEVELOP ARCHES?

If you have flat feet as an adult, arches aren't something you can usually just 'develop', as it is a natural process in early childhood. We all start with large fat pads on our feet in infancy (which gives them a flat-footed appearance). As our muscles grow stronger and become defined, our arches develop – along with our gait, balance and coordination. This usually occurs by the age of seven or so, though it varies from person to person.

WILL HAVING ORTHOTICS HELP ME GET ARCHES?

Orthotics are a fantastic and effective way of keeping flat feet supported and help treat foot pains and problems. However, they will not change the shape of your arch, just like wearing glasses doesn't improve your vision after you take your glasses off.

I HAVE FOOT PAIN. DOES THAT MEAN IT'S LINKED TO MY FLAT FEET?

Not necessarily, though it very well could be. We don't recommend assuming that flat feet are the sole cause of your foot pain, as it may lead you to make an incorrect assumption about what the problem is or seek ineffective treatment.

Our Values – We:



love what we do



challenge the status quo



are stronger together



aim to continuously improve



do what we say, sometimes more, never less