

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

TOE WALKING

Stept to Success Occupational Therapy

Definition

Idiopathic toe-walking (ITW) is when someone walks on their toes without using their heels, and the reason is unknown.

Cause?

Practitioners now agree that behavioral problems, mild to moderate motor skill delays, orthopedic problems, or a combination of all three could be the cause of TW (Williams et al., 2020).

Sensory?

It is also believed that children with ITW may also have sensory processing difficulties, contributing to it's cause.

What can TW come with?

High / Low muscle tone

Low postural control / Poor balance

Developmental disabilities

Gait abnormalities (pain, fatigue, poor fluidity of movement)

Sensory Modulation

Vestibular difficulties
Aversions to textures (food, clothing tags)

TOE WALKING

HOW DOES OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY HELP?

MOTOR COORDINATION



PROPRIOCEPTIVE RICH ACTIVITIES



FUNCTIONAL PLAY

EXERCISES AND STRETCHING



SENSORY PROCESSING SKILLS

Tips and Tricks



Go to the Park!

Balance beam

Walking up and down an inclined surface
(slide)

Lots of jumping! (trampoline, or on the
grass/leaves/snow)

At home


Stand on a wedge (cereal box)

Lots of stretching! (squat to stand
for balance)

Build an obstacle course including
balancing on stepping stones (mom
and dad shoes)

Jumping! Set up hurdles (rolled up
blankets) towels onto cushions





Additional Tips and Tricks



Have your child wear hightop sneakers for tactile feedback when they are TW

Animal walks: crab walks, penguin walks, leapfrog

Yoga positions: downward dog, mountain pose, tree pose

Tactile feedback on the bottom of the feet: walking on the grass, sand etc.

Toe-raising exercises and picking up items with toes



RESOURCES



TYPICAL TOE-WALKING

SOVLUTIONS



McHugh, J.J., Baxter, M.F., Chang, P.F. and Mitchell, K., 2021. Idiopathic toe walking and postural instability: The next step. *Annals of International Occupational Therapy*, 4(3), pp.e109-e116.

Chu, V., Girolami, G.L. and Grant-Beuttler, M., 2023. Assessing sensory processing differences in children with idiopathic toe walking: A pilot study. *Physiotherapy Theory and Practice*, 39(11), pp.2314-2326.

Fagan, P., Murphy-Simmons, D., Robertson, H., Simmons, D. (2022) Addressing toe walking in children and adolescents: An interdisciplinary approach. Available at: URL (Accessed: 12 June 2024).

Please follow the link to see further tips and tricks!

<https://youtu.be/3HjU0aE0PQY>

