

In-toeing

What is In-toeing?

In-toeing (also called “pigeon toed”) describes feet that turn inwards instead of pointing straight ahead. You notice it when a child walks or runs.

Children of all ages may have in-toeing for different reasons and some children will trip or fall as they walk and run.

It is considered part of normal development. In most cases, in-toeing will correct itself as children grow without the need for casts, braces, surgery or special treatment. If it does not fully resolve, in-toeing does not cause pain or any long term problems.

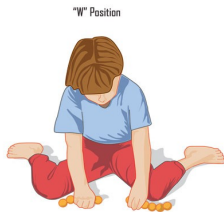


What Causes In-toeing?

Three main conditions can cause the feet to turn inward:

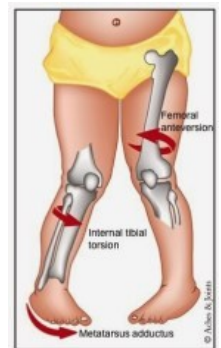
1. A twist in the thigh bone (Femoral Anteversion)

A child’s thighbone can turn inward causing the knees and feet to point inward when walking or running. Children with Femoral Anteversion like to sit in the “W” position. Many children have this and it is most obvious between ages 5-6. Femoral Anteversion corrects itself in almost all children as they grow by about 10 years of age. Special shoes, braces and exercises do not help. Surgery is only an option when there is a severe deformity that causes problems walking in a child over 9 or 10 years of age.



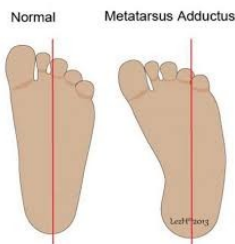
2. An inward twist of the bone in the lower leg (Tibial Torsion)

This happens often in babies and young children. The tibia will straighten and untwist as the child grows. Tibial torsion almost always improves without the need for special splints, braces or shoes. These treatments do not help the natural growth of the tibia and do not correct in-toeing.



3. A curve in the bones of the foot (Metatarsus Adductus)

The child’s feet bend inward from the middle of the foot to the toes. This can be mild and flexible or more severe. It is caused by the position of the baby in the uterus before birth. In most cases, Metatarsus Adductus improves by itself over the first 4-6 months of life.



What can I do?

Most children who in-toe will self correct over time with growth and do not require treatment. If you have concerns as your child is getting older or if your child is unable to complete daily activities due to in-toeing, then contact your child’s doctor to discuss your concerns.

If you have spoken to your health care provider and continue to have concerns, please contact Pathways Health Centre for Children to book an appointment at 519.542.3471.