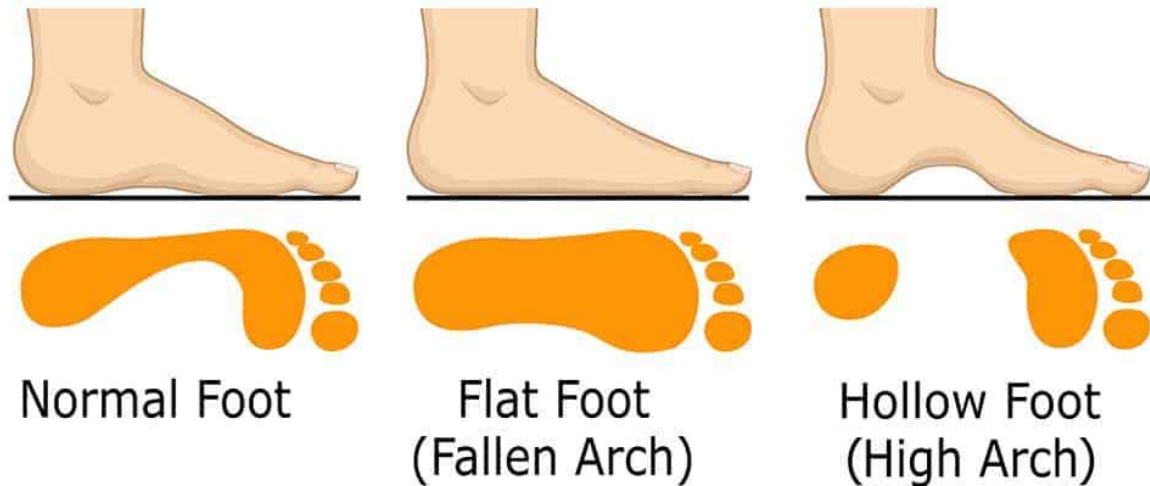




NIKHIL NANAVATI

Flat feet (pes planus)



Introduction

‘Flat feet’ are a very common problem. Many people may have had this problem from a young age whilst others have only noticed it as they have gotten older. There are many causes for a flat foot and it may be that alterations in shoes and physiotherapy are all that is required to treat the underlying problem. However, there are many cases that won’t respond to these treatments and surgery may be required in these cases. Surgery for this condition is ‘a-la carte’ and patient-specific as there are multiple options available to a specialist foot and ankle surgeon. It is important to identify the underlying cause for the condition as this will guide towards an appropriate surgical plan.



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Treatment

Modified shoe wear: Insoles can be used to recreate the arch and reduce pain for patients. If the heel is excessively tilted, then occasionally wedges under the heel are required to restore the tilt back to its normal position.

Physiotherapy: A tight calf complex and tight sole of foot have been associated with developing flat feet. Physiotherapists are experts in reducing tightness in muscles to improve range of motion and reduce the severity of flat feet.

Surgery: If patients are still in pain despite the above treatment, surgery may be required to restore the alignment and biomechanics of the foot. This surgery is very patient-specific as everyone will have a different cause for their flat feet. If there is arthritis in the joints, it may be that fusion procedures are required. If there is no arthritis, it may be that tendon-transfers ('joint sparring') are required. A typical tendon transfer procedure would require attention to the heel bone, the medial arch and the final position of the big toe to allow continued, comfortable walking following correction. A typical fusion procedure would focus on the 'subtalar, talonavicular and calcaneocuboid' joints to restore alignment and reduce pain.

Patients will also be provided with a personalised treatment plan following their individual operations.