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THE LONDON FOOT HOSPITAL
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Foot exercises are FUN

and help every child towards perfect foot-health

IT is most important to remember this about youngsters' feet: they must be allowed to develop *naturally*. Badly made shoes (or ill-fitting ones) will put undue pressure on the soft bones of the feet; tight socks will restrict their movement; abnormal "supports" make for incorrect development.

So the first thing for parents to do is to see that they don't endanger their babies' feet in any of these ways. Having done that, they can achieve still more by simple — yet most effective — exercises. Here are some that are really worthwhile: they have been devised by a well-known physiotherapist (so you can be sure they'll do a lot of good) and they are fun, for the children and for you. Practise them yourself for a few minutes so that you can feel their effect. You will then be able to show your children exactly how to do them, and they may even benefit your own feet. They should be done, as a rule, in bare feet — but if for any reason socks are preferred do make sure they are large enough. **Remember, always, that tight or short socks can damage feet even in the best-fitting shoes.**

These simple exercises can do nothing but good. They are designed to develop not only the foot muscles, but also the balanced use of the leg, hip and back muscles, that are concerned with the movement of the feet. But they are not meant to correct any abnormality; if there is anything unusual in your child's feet, consult your doctor.

- HINTS ON BUYING YOUR CHILD'S SHOES**
- ★ Always take the child to the shop and have the new shoes fitted on the premises.
 - ★ Make quite sure that the shoes are long enough and wide enough.
 - ★ See that the shoes have a straight inner edge and, particularly in the case of infants' shoes, that they are really flexible.
 - ★ Make it a rule to buy the best quality shoes you can afford.

FIRST EXERCISES — FOR TODDLERS ONWARDS

EXERCISE I EGGS IN THE NEST

First of all put your hands together, palm to palm, quite flat, fingers straight, thumbs towards you. Now press with the pads of your fingers and the heels of your hands. You will see that you make a space between your hands bigger at the upper border, the thumb side, and hardly visible along the little finger edge.

This is similar to what you are going to do with your feet. Sit on the floor, back straight, knees pressed out and down as far as possible. (Children will be able to touch the floor quite easily.) Put the soles together and press with pads of the toes and the heels, so making a space between the soles. Drop a marble or small toy in the space. Let the child do this for himself. The more seconds he will stay in that position, the better. This exercise uses the important muscles on the sole of the foot and helps to overcome any tendency to roll the knees inward from the hips. This "squinting" of the knees is commonly found in weak feet.



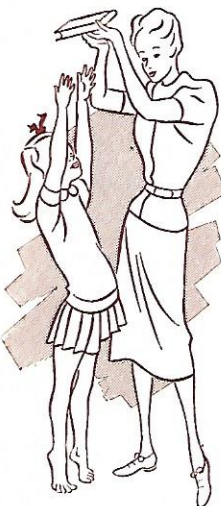
EXERCISE II SPONGE BALL

Spare a few minutes at bath time for foot play. Catch sponge between feet. Pull up stopper with feet.



EXERCISE III STRETCH AND CLIMB

Encourage rising on toes by holding something, just out of reach and moving away. Encourage climbing up and down stairs, especially up. This develops strong back and hip muscles, very important for the right use of the feet. Don't deprive a child of this valuable exercise by carrying him, even if it takes those extra few minutes which you cannot spare.



EXERCISE IV GIANTS AND DWARFS

Rise on toes and bend knees outward, touch floor with finger tips and make yourself as small as possible. Then suddenly stretch up as tall as possible, high up on toes, fingers reaching to ceiling. Drop back again to dwarf and shoot up again to giant.



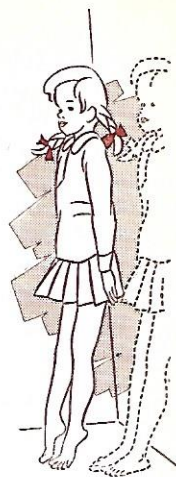
MORE PROGRESSIVE EXERCISES—

FOR FOUR (and more) YEAR OLDS

EXERCISE V ROCKING

Stand with your back nice and straight against a wall and your heels a few inches from the wall, feet looking straight forward, about 2 in. apart. Now, keeping heels down, lift up foot, so stretching the tendon at the back of the heel. Rock over on to toes, lifting heel as high as possible.

Now stand clear of the wall, feet about 2 in. apart, looking straight forward. Rise on toes, keeping ball of little toe on the ground. Never mind if your feet seem to turn in. Then rock backwards on to heels, lifting rest of foot off ground. When you feel the stretch you may want to bend forward at the waist. Don't. Keep body straight.



EXERCISE VI THE CATERPILLAR

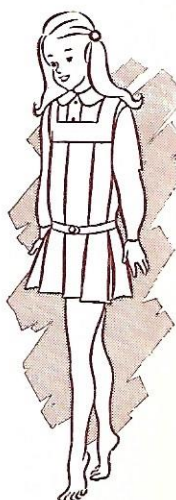
Put one hand flat on a table. Press with heel of hand and pads of fingers — keeping fingers quite straight — so that knuckles and back of hand rise a little. This is how your feet will work in this exercise. Now sit on a chair, thighs at right angles to leg, feet looking straight forward and a few inches apart. Then, keeping toes straight, press with heel and pads of toes so that centre of foot rises a little. Try to keep ball of big toe as much on the ground as possible.

This exercise may also be done standing and it is useful to practise it in shoes and to train a child to do it at odd intervals during the day, when standing waiting for a bus, for example, or in line at school.



EXERCISE VII STILTS

Rise as high as possible on toes, keeping ball of little toe on ground. Give an extra pull up with thigh muscles so that knees are absolutely straight. Then walk round room with tiny steps; knees always straight.



EXERCISE VIII BALANCING

Rise on toes, little toes on ground, knees very straight. Then take one foot off ground and see how many seconds you can hold balance. Step from foot to foot, holding balance as long as possible on each foot.



THIS BOOKLET HAS BEEN COMPILED IN THE INTERESTS OF CHILDREN'S FOOT-HEALTH BY THE MAKERS OF START-RITE SHOES.

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