

Jackie Question:

I have been hoping for an opportunity to ask about **working with flat/fallen arches**. I have a couple clients who are almost completely flat footed; other than working on daily habitual patterns in stance, and awareness while working out (squats and lunges, how the knees and hips align), I'm curious what to do for totally pronated feet. I'm inclined to recommend barefoot balancing work, and yogic practice like Joint Freeing series specifically for toes and ankles, as well as rolling the feet and calves. Any other recommendations, insights?

Hi Jackie, yes, I agree with you on some of the protocol you suggest. My question to you is are these clients genetically flat feet? Either way, you can do similar protocol, however, you may never see any visual differences in the genetically flat-footed person. They may report to you that their feet feel more buoyant and alive, and if they are having knee or hip issues, these may subside.

I would suggest working with the toe correctors that I suggested during our training. It's important that if they begin to feel uncomfortable while wearing them, that they remove them, and then try again later that day. Basically, they would be taken on/off thru the day until they can tolerate them for longer amounts of time.

Make sure these people (all people actually) have wide enough toe boxes in their shoes. If they have no arch, I also have them consider using arch supports at different times, such as when they are running. They are not the best candidates for minimalist shoes, unless they have no foot pain, and no referred pain up into their knees/hips. Remember, this could change as they are doing the work. If there is a lot of foot pain, and going minimalist makes it worse, sometimes a firmer bottom shoe like the Roku, or the Dansko is more in line, especially for lots of movement. (This is not a hard and true fact).

I would have them do the various toe exercises that I have laid out in videos on your learning system, including the rubber band work. It's also important to remember that this does not necessarily begin and end in the feet. They need to release their peroneals (lateral side of the lower leg every day, and then after this do a lot of range of motion of their toes, feet and ankles. Follow immediately with glute strengthening, including some core stabilizing.

You can use the Single Leg Stance test as one self-care test for them to see which way they fall out when standing in this (some people need to close their eyes). This was also part of your training and is included in a video. Don't forget to also check on their dorsiflexion ability and assign tasks for this.

Often with the pronation you may also find medial meniscus pain and/or poor patellar tracking causing pain center of knee. Attempting very mild knee decompression followed immediately by Vastus medialis strengthening (protocol shared in this past training).

And did I say: make sure you have checked their hip heights while they are barefoot (if possible). Check this to jaw issues (body to jaw alignment protocol). If adjust the jaw temporarily with a q-tip evens out the hips but NOT entirely, have them put a slight lift under their dropped arches (start small with ¼" or ½"), keeping Q-tip in. Re-check hips. If they are now fully balanced, this would be both a descending issue (jaw creating what's below) and ascending issue (feet/ankles creating what's above).

Definitely promote going barefoot at different times during the day, inside and also outside on natural earth, and foot massage on themselves everyday. All of those 26 bones in each foot need lots of varied movement.