

A guide to your child's insoles/heel cups



What is an insole or a heel cup?

An insole/heel cup is an orthotic device which is placed inside a shoe, beneath the foot.

Their purpose is to enhance the biomechanics and alignment of the foot - they do not change the foot position. Insoles/heel cups can be made from a variety of different materials depending on your child's needs.

What does an insole or heel cup do?

An insole/heel cup is often provided for a number of reasons, including:

- To reduce pain by altering the biomechanics of gait
- To realign your child's foot and ankle when walking
- To redistribute areas of pressures on the foot
- To increase support and stability
- To control movement and joints

How are insoles/heel cups worn?

They should be inserted into your child's normal shoes. Your orthotist will show you how to do this correctly, but as a general rule follow these guidelines:

1. If there is a removable insole inside your child's shoe, remove it.
2. Check that there are no objects in the shoe, or on the sole of the shoe.
3. Insert the heel cup/insole into the shoe and check the flat base is sitting flat inside the shoe, with the heel flush against the back of the shoe.
4. Insert your child's foot into the shoe.
5. Once the shoe and heel cup/insole is on, tap your child's heel to the back of the shoe and fasten the laces, or Velcro[®], securely.

Your child should always wear socks or tights when wearing insoles.

Do I need to buy special shoes?

No, insoles/heel cups can be worn in your child's normal shoes. Sometimes you may need to go up a size to accommodate the insoles, and we recommend selecting shoes with laces or a Velcro fastening.

It is important that all of your child's footwear has the same heel height. Slip-on shoes are not appropriate.

Wearing specialist corrective running shoes with insoles may result in over correction and cause pain. Initial signs to look for include sore knees and hips.

How long should my child wear insoles/heel cups for?

Your orthotist will advise how long your child should wear their insoles/heel cups for. It takes a while to get used to wearing insoles/heel cups, and they may feel slightly uncomfortable at first. Gradually build up the length of wear time, until your child can wear as required.



Day 1: 30-60 minutes

Day 2: 1-2 hours

Day 3: 2-4 hours

Day 4-7: 4-6 hours

Week 2: 6+ hours, starting to become comfortable

It is important that your child increases their usage time whilst doing their day-to-day routine, so make sure they aren't sitting for long periods. If your child is not active whilst getting used to their insole/heel cup, it will take much longer for their feet to get used to them.

Is it painful to wear insoles/heel cups?

No, it should not be painful to wear insoles/heel cups. It is normal to experience some aching at first, however any discomfort should go away as your child becomes accustomed to wearing the insoles/heel cups.

Do I need to watch out for anything?

You should frequently check your child's feet for rubs or marks, especially when the insoles are new. Some red marks are normal and should fade within 15 minutes. If the marks do not fade, or if you see any blistering or sores, you should stop your child wearing the insoles/heel cups and contact your orthotist.

You should also check the device itself for cracks or general wear and tear.

Caring for your child's insoles/heel cups

Like any footwear, the lifespan of insoles depends on how often they are worn, the intensity of the activity they are used for, and how well they are cared for.

You can prolong the life of your child's insoles by keeping them clean and dry. They will air out best if slipped slightly out of your child's shoes between use.

To clean the insoles, brush them clean or wipe them lightly with a damp cloth. Do not soak the insoles. Do not machine wash or dry the insoles, nor dry clean. Do not expose the insoles to excessive heat; for example, do not dry them on top of a radiator or by a fire.

