

# Orthopaedic Physiotherapy MOT for Children\*

The orthopaedic MOT for kids

Does your baby always turn his head to one side? Do her feet turn in?

By Physio for all clinics

Published by: [Families London South West](#)



Image by futurestreet

Does your toddler seem to fall more regularly than his peers or does he walk in a peculiar fashion? Do his shoes always wear down at one side, are his feet very flat? Does your child complain of night pains or aching after lots of running or playing sport? Does your teenager suffer from back or neck pain or have difficulty sitting comfortably for long periods? Does she always seem to be the member of the team repeatedly injured?

If the answer to any of the above is yes or if you have any other worries about growth or development, your son/daughter needs an Orthopaedic MOT.

In utero, your baby is subject to many unusual forces and positions and often gets stuck for a while. This can cause all sorts of problems with unusual joint positions, tight muscles and occasionally pressure on nerves. If caught quickly enough, simple stretching and positioning is all that's needed. If not dealt with speedily, these abnormalities can cause long term problems and take much longer to resolve.

Ligament laxity, knock-knees, flat feet and bow legs often run in families and simply require an appropriate exercise programme and footwear. Sometimes, however, there are pathological conditions which give rise to the same appearance early on in the disease process but which progress to much more serious abnormalities. Once again, early detection is the key.

As your child grows, they characteristically have spates where the bones grow as much as 1mm/day, but the soft tissues i.e. muscles, tendons and ligaments only increase in size by a maximal 0.8mm/day and so are always trying to catch up. This can cause problems with night pains, aching particularly in the calf and behind the knee. As muscles struggle to keep up with bone growth, inevitably imbalance occurs around joints which can lead to a decrease in function and pain after rigorous activity.

If a muscular imbalance persists, then one group around a joint may become relatively "stronger" and put increased stress and strain on one side of a joint. This can once again lead to pain and recurrent injury. Once a cycle of acute or chronic injury is established, it becomes very difficult to regain full pain-free function and often the growing skeleton can be deformed by such repeated incidences.

The growing spine is also prone to many additional stresses and strains exacerbated by our more sedentary lifestyle and increasing use of computers at work and play.

*The Orthopaedic MOT is a specific analysis of joints, muscles, nerves, co-ordination, strength and posture. The Orthopaedic MOT is offered by an ever-expanding team of therapists at Physio for All, based at the Battersea Practice, 40 Webbs Road, London SW11 6SF. Christine Julien-Laferriere is a Physiotherapist who specialise in Paediatrics, including developmental, postural and respiratory complaints for children and cranio-sacral therapy.*

--Published by Families SW (London) Magazine -- February 2003