

Using the Ponseti technique to correct talipes (clubfoot) – looking after the boots and bar: information for families

At Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH), we use the Ponseti technique to correct talipes (clubfoot) in children. This is a technique used to straighten the foot using manipulation and stretching. After the plaster cast stage, your child will wear 'boots and bar' equipment until they are five years old. This information sheet explains how to look after your child's boots and bar during the second and final stage of your child's treatment. This takes a lot of dedication and care to ensure their treatment is successful.

Using the boots and bar

When your child is initially fitted with their boots and bar, your Physiotherapist will explain and demonstrate how they are fitted correctly and how to use them. We expect your child to become upset when the boots and bar are first fitted, but it is important you persist with the treatment to allow them time to adapt. This is not a painful treatment.

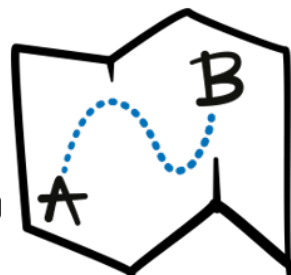
For the first three months, your child must wear their boots and bar for 23 hours a day, with occasional checks in the first week or so to ensure their skin is not rubbing. Following this, your child will need to wear their boots and bar for 12 to 14 hours every night until they are ready to finish their treatment at approximately five years of age.

It is important you follow these guidelines. The boots and bar ensure the feet are held in the correct position to avoid the foot returning to its previous place. Without effective use of the boots and bar your child may require further casting and/or surgical intervention.

Adjusting the boots and bar

Between follow up appointments you may need to adjust your child's boots and bar. Please use the following method.

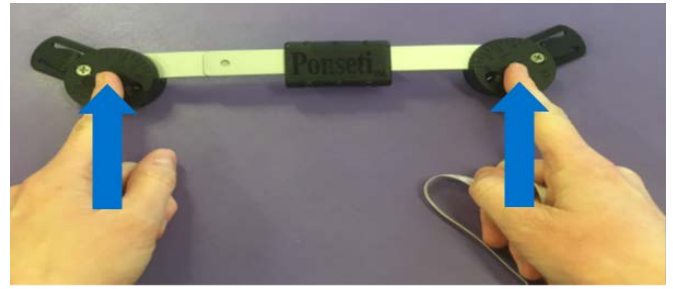
1. **Measure the width** - using a tape measure, measure the width between your child's shoulders as shown in the photograph. Measure from the bony end at the top of each shoulder.



2. **Loosen the bar** - once you have checked the length required, you will need to loosen the bar to allow it to be adjusted. You can do this by using an Allen key and loosening the black clasp in the centre of the bar. Both Allen key bolts need to be loosened to be able to adjust the bar width.



3. **Lengthen the bar** - once loose, you can gently pull the two ends of the bar apart. The bar length should be the same as your child's shoulder measurement. Measure the bar length between the middle screws of the two circular black plastic boot attachments (see index fingers in this photo).



4. **Check the measurement** - double check the shoulder length measurement against the bar length measurement between the two centre screws. Once happy you can then re-tighten both bolts gently in the black clasp with the Allen key. Tug each end of the bar gently to ensure the bar is secure. Do not over tighten the bolts as this could cause the black clasp to split.



Further information and support

If you have any further questions about adjusting or using the boots and bar, please call the Physiotherapy department on 020 7405 9200 ext 5144 and ask for a member of the Ponseti Team.

