

Occupational Therapy Service for Children and Young People

Tying Shoelaces – Hints and Tips

Tying shoelaces requires a level of dexterity most children don't possess until they're between five and seven, so take it slow.

Hints and Tips

- Your child can practice looping the cords on the waistbands of shorts, joggers or dressing gowns just to get used to making that first part of a knot.
- When trying to tie a shoelace for the first time have your child sit on the floor with the shoe between their legs. This is easier than trying to reach down. Once your child is able to tie the shoe in this position get your child to place the shoe on their knee or whilst they are sitting on a chair or step. Finally put the shoe on your child's foot and have them put their foot up on a raised step or chair so that they can still see what they are doing. Make sure that the laces are long enough, shorter the laces are harder to manipulate the laces through the fingers.
- Using laces that more easily hold the looped shape and can be easier for children to learn with initially, such as the laces in some trainers.
- Use two different coloured laces in the same shoe to allow the child to easily differentiate between the various steps involved. Alternatively you can stick different colours of tape to the two different ends of a shoelace.
- Flat laces are easier to tie than round ones as they are less likely to loosen between each stage.
- For further ideas, methods and videos see **Ian's Shoelace Site -** <https://www.fiegggen.com/shoelace/> and <https://www.nhs.uk/healthcareprofessionals/occupationaltherapy/activities/tying-shoelaces/>

Alternative Strategies to tying shoe laces

If your child is unable to master this skill then alternatives to shoelaces are available. Velcro is the easiest way of fastening shoes however if your child has shoes with lace holes then please see below for alternative strategies for more information.

- Hickies Laces - Hickies are easy to fasten laces that expands and contracts with foot movement to deliver secure fitting.



- Greeper Laces - Greeper laces are fitted to the footwear and they are loosened simply by pulling on the pull tab of the toggle. The user then simply makes the lace loops bigger to tighten the laces and enjoy a secure, snug fit. Small stoppers on the lace loops prevent the Greepers from coming undone.



- No tie shoelaces



- Elastic Laces



- Atlas Laces