

## Toe Walker Tap Shoes

This is an intervention that helps to decrease toe walking in a fun, but therapeutic way. Toe walking is often seen in children with Autism, but also in children without Autism. Prolonged toe walking (present beyond age 2) in any individual, can lead to tightening of the heel cord muscles at the back of the ankle. This changes the alignment of forces along the foot/ankle, leg and joints through the whole body. It is as if the child is walking and running in a pair of high heeled shoes all day long. Toe walking is often an adaptive response to overstimulation of the sensory systems and an inability to organize information as well as a response to decreased body awareness and challenges in balance. NOT EVERY CHILD WITH AUTISM IS A TOE-WALKER AND NOT EVERY TOE-WALKER IS A CHILD WITH AUTISM. Providing sound (auditory responses when the foot makes contact with the ground provides a sensory cue through sound, also providing joint input due to the position of the ankle when the heel touches versus the front of the foot as in toe walking.

### Items Needed:

- *Rubber soled shoes (child's shoes)*
- *Painter's Tape/masking tape (anything thicker will not allow the clicking sound to come through when contact is made)*
- *Galvanized Metal Plumbing Washers- flat and smooth (found at your local hardware store prices roughly between 35-65 cents depending on size. The size of the washer should not exceed the width of the shoe heel.)*
- *Ensure the surface you are walking on is either hardwood, tile or surface that will reflect the sound.*

### Directions:

- **Step 1:** *With the painter's tape, securely tape on the washers on the heel of the shoes, wrapping around a couple of times to ensure the washer won't fall off.*
- **Step 2:** *Do the same for your own shoes so you can model to the child how when you walk. Hit your heel first on the ground so that it makes a tap sound. See if the child can imitate.*
- **Step 3:** *Walk for long straight distances. (great places to practice this strategy is malls, grocery store aisles, school hallways).*