

Many children and young people with hemiplegia have difficulty in tying their shoelaces. Here are just some ideas that might help.

Velcro

Shoes with Velcro fastenings are obviously one of the best solutions. Velcro-fastened shoes and trainers are widely available, and some physiotherapy departments in conjunction with the orthotist will replace existing fastenings with Velcro straps. A few parents, however, have mentioned that this can look rather strange unless it is well done. Pedro boots and other special shoes, which many children obtain through their physiotherapists, can be ordered with Velcro fastenings, and straps on shoes and sandals can be extended with elastic and Velcro to fit over splints.

Bear in mind, however, that as a child grows he or she might want to choose from a wider range of footwear. Sooner or later you need to tackle the shoelace problem head-on!

Coiler shoelaces

These stretchy, 'curly' laces, which come in a range of colours, are the best solution for many people. You put on the shoe, pull them tight and they stay tight although they are not actually tied. The shoelaces have no pressure points and allow natural movement. HemiHelp sell Coiler shoelaces in our online shop.

Click on the 'shop' link on our website or type the following into your browser:

http://www.hemihelp.org.uk/support_us/shop/coiler_shoelaces

Other ideas

Greepers www.greeper.com is another clever kind of shoelace that doesn't need tying and untying, but is tightened/loosened by pulling on tabs. If you go to the website you will be directed to a video on YouTube showing how they work.

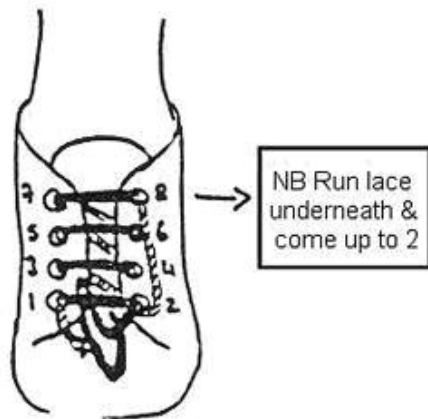
Nottingham Rehab www.nrs-uk.co.uk Tel: **0845 120 4522** have elastic shoe laces in brown or black

Laces If a child finds it difficult to learn to tie laces, it is worth experimenting with different types. Some children find flat laces easier than round ones, some find round ones easier. In general, the thicker the lace, the easier it is to tie.

Lacing with one hand

If you can only use one hand or find it difficult to reach your feet, there are several ways of tying laces single-handed. We list four such methods below, with diagrams. You may find you need a longer lace than the type supplied. But it is not necessary to use a conventional lace: strong string or stool cord is just as efficient if a lace of the right length is not available. The numbers indicate the direction in which the lace should be threaded. For all these methods, only one end of the lace is threaded down or up the shoe and then tied. The other end is secured in position with a knot.

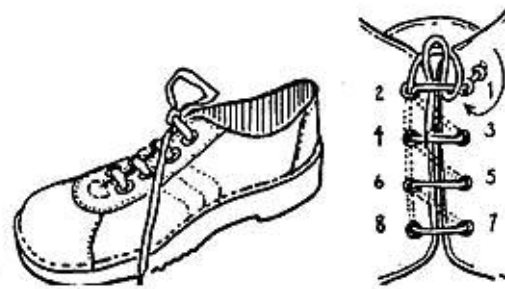
Method A



Secure the knotted end at 1. Thread the other end down 2, up 3 and so on to 8. Thread 8 up through 2
To tighten lace. Work up from the toe and pull at 2.
Make a loop in the end, pass under 1, 2 and pull tight.

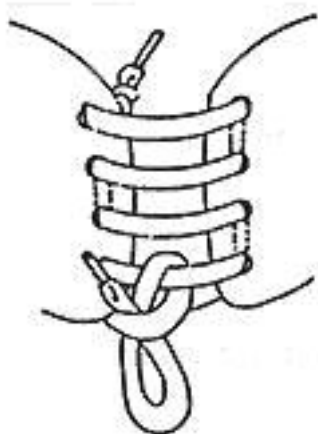
NB: Run lace underneath and come up to 2.

Method B



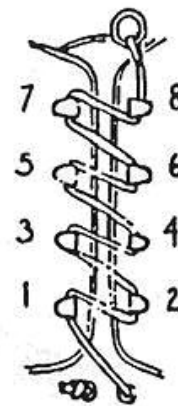
This is A in reverse. You lace from the top towards the toe. Pull the lace back up through 2 and secure as shown in diagram.

Method C



This is the simplest method. Lace up from the toe and secure as shown in diagram.

Method D



Hook method. Start by attaching a ring to the unknotted end of the lace. Lace in the direction of the numbers and fix by hooking the ring attached to the end of the lace on to one of the ski-boot hooks. To loosen, unhook the lace. If the boot has an ordinary eyelet at the bottom the fixing knot can be threaded through this. Some open-toe boots have holes in the base of the tongue and the lace can be fastened through these. This holds up the tongue and keeps the knot on the surface where it cannot rub the toes.

See also **HemiHelp** Information Sheets **Shoes** and **Dressing**

HemiHelp has a range of information sheets for both families where there is a child with hemiplegia and adults with the condition, as well as a Useful Names and Addresses List to help you contact other organisations.

Hemiplegia is a neurological condition that weakens one side of the body and affects one child in a thousand. It is sometimes described as a form of cerebral palsy and the effects are similar to those of a stroke. **HemiHelp** is a membership organisation offering information and support to children and adults affected by hemiplegia and their families.

HemiHelp is happy for you to make photocopies of any part of this document.

Helpline: 0845 123 2372 (Mon-Fri 10am-1pm)

Admin: 0845 120 3713 • Fax: 0845 120 3723

Email: support@hemihelp.org.uk • Web: www.hemihelp.org.uk

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