



Upsee

Upsee Factsheet #06: FAQs - Using the Upsee

My child becomes overly excitable when using the Upsee. Is that OK?

Yes! It's ok for the child, but you need to be careful that any unpredictable movements by them don't cause you to lose your balance. If the child is very excitable and active, start using the Upsee in standing only, before you progress to walking where you have a wall, couch or handrail for support.



When the child becomes calm and adjusted to the Upsee, try walking together, pushing a wheeled toy or moving to the beat of music or a song.

My child is fearful of standing. Can the Upsee help?

If the child is fearful of being upright or walking, ensure they feel secure as possible by standing at the sofa and using the Upsee in a familiar environment at the start. Keep the child in close contact with you for a feeling of security, and use distractions like playing favourite games with brothers or sisters, or watching a favourite TV programme. You can progress to a wider range of activities as the child gains confidence.



How long should I use the Upsee for each session?

When you first use the Upsee, stand for about 2 - 5 minutes depending on the child's weight-bearing ability. Keep your initial sessions short. If the child is happy in the Upsee, they will be more likely to accept this new experience of standing and stepping. You can increase the amount of time in the Upsee as the child starts enjoying it and you become more comfortable. Remember to stop using the Upsee if you or our child experience any discomfort.



How many times per week should I use the Upsee?

This depends on what you wish to achieve. If your goal for the child is just to experience assisted standing and stepping, then the Upsee can be used as often as the child enjoys these alternative positions.

If the child has the potential to develop standing and stepping skills while using the Upsee, then a daily routine using the Upsee may be helpful.



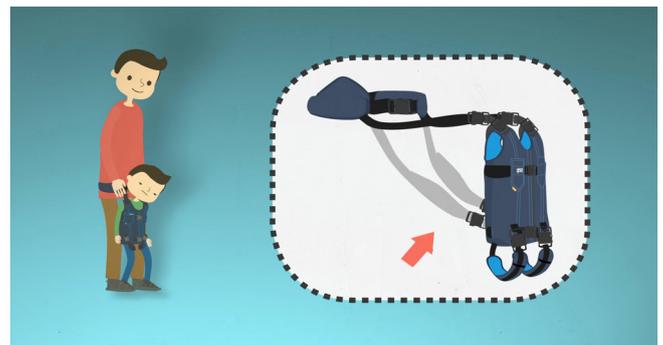
How do I know how tight to pull the connecting straps?

In order to allow the child to be both safe and active in weight-bearing activities, there is a “fine tuning” process that you must go through together. We suggest the following guidelines for the “fine tuning” of the hip and shoulder straps:



Fine-tuning the pelvic straps (grey)

Only tighten the pelvic straps to the point where the child’s pelvis is at its highest level while allowing the child to bear the majority of his own weight. You should not bear all the child’s weight through the connecting straps.

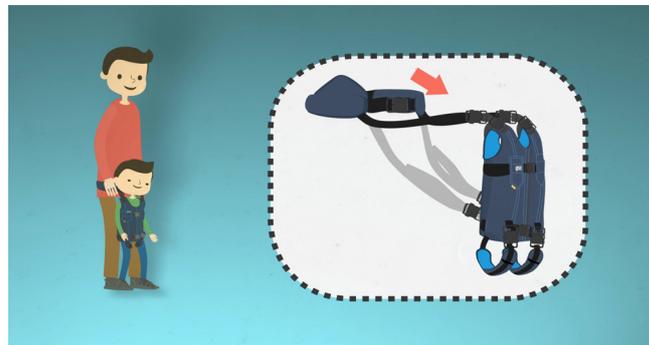


To find the right tension, you may need to loosen and tighten these straps a bit while looking checking the child’s pelvic position with an assistant or by using a mirror.

After you start walking you may have to readjust the connecting straps again as the harness and straps may relax slightly during the first few minutes of walking.

Fine-tuning the shoulder connecting straps (black)

The shoulder straps support the child's trunk so it does not sway forwards/backwards or from side to side. They should not bear the child's weight like a suspension harness. "Tuning" the shoulder straps means tightening and loosening them until you find the right level of support. You will know you have this when the trunk is supported without suspending the child from their shoulders. As with the grey straps, they black ones may also need to be readjusted if they relax during the first few minutes of walking.



What activities should we do in the Upsee?

There are many possibilities. Some general suggestions include:

- Standing at the sofa or low table
- Cruising along a sofa
- Passive stepping progressing to active assisted stepping
- Step standing (see the FAQ about steps and stairs) to gain activity around trunk/pelvic areas
- Pushing a wheeled toy
- Games including ball games, action songs etc.



My child just "hangs" in the Upsee. What should I do?

This shows that the child is not bearing weight through their legs. There may be several reasons for this:

- Check the fitting of the harness fastenings, leg straps and connecting straps to ensure there is enough support to hold the child's legs in an almost straight position. The straps should be secure enough to support the child's trunk in an upright position, but not so much that they are suspended.
- The child may be tired. Take them out of the Upsee to rest.
- The child may not yet be able to bear weight through their legs. You can begin to develop their standing tolerance – see the section "My child's development and the Upsee" for further guidance.



- The child is capable of weight bearing but is not motivated at the moment. Search for a suitable activity that will help stimulate the child to be active.

My child’s upper body is leaning forward. Why?

If the child is leaning forward, something is not adjusted properly. There are four possibilities:

- The shoulder straps need fine tuning
- The harness is not fitted snugly around the child’s trunk. Pay particular attention to the pelvic strap (the lower one on the harness).
- The child’s feet are not secure within the sandals – tighten the straps.
- The adult and child are not a good match for using the Upsee. If the adult’s stomach is pushing the child forward or the child’s shoulders are above your navel, you will not be able to use the Upsee with the child. However, there is still the option of finding another suitable adult to enjoy the Upsee with the child.



My child does not want to walk in the Upsee. What should I do?

Check the child is comfortable and adjust the Upsee if necessary. Discontinue use if they show any sign of discomfort. Try just using the Upsee for standing to play in a familiar environment. Ensure the activities available are enjoyable e.g. favourite toys, musical games, friends/siblings. Go at the child’s pace and do not force them to move in the Upsee. Leave it for a while and try again – they will get the hang of it eventually.



Will the Upsee draw unwanted attention to my child’s disability?

This is a very sensitive question, and one that is difficult to answer. The parents we have worked with have found that the harness looks like a cool waistcoat, and the double sandal is unobtrusive, so it is not immediately obvious that their child is using the Upsee. However, more important for them have been the opportunities for family participation, which they feel far outweigh everything else. Most passers-by tend to be positive and encouraging. Nonetheless, if you are uncomfortable with this, the Upsee can be used equally successfully within the privacy of your own home or garden/back yard.

