Treatments for Foot Drop

**Medications** that may be effective in treating spasticity include [Lioresal (baclofen)](https://multiplesclerosis.net/treatment/baclofen/), [Zanaflex (tizanidine)](https://multiplesclerosis.net/treatment/zanaflex/), Klonopin (clonazepam), Valium (diazepam), Dantrium (dantrolene), and Neurontin (gabapentin). The drug most commonly used to treat spasticity, Lioresal (baclofen), can cause you to feel weak or fatigued. The challenge with Lioresal is finding a dosage that relieves spasticity without causing excessive weakness. Another treatment option is involves injection of the drug Botox (botulinum toxin) to block nerve signaling to muscles. In some people whose spasticity is severe and does not respond to oral medication, a pump can be surgically implanted in the abdomen to deliver low doses of baclofen into the spinal canal. Intrathecal baclofen can be an effective treatment in cases of severe spasticity and the low doses of baclofen utilized limit the side effects of weakness and fatigue.

**Functional Electrical Stimulation-How does it work?**

FES involves sending a small electrical charge to a nerve which controls the muscle which normally lifts the front of the foot. At the right moment in your gait – when your foot is about to lift up to be swung forwards – the FES device stimulates the nerve and the muscle lifts the foot.

Because FES stimulates the existing nerves in the leg, it is important that the nerve fibers between the spinal cord and the muscles are not damaged. So to be suitable for the treatment, you need to be able to walk, even if only for a few meters with a stick or crutch.

And FES doesn’t work on its own – research has shown that while FES is effective in improving walking, enabling greater distances to be achieved, exercise can also make a **significant difference** to walking. So a combination of FES plus exercise might prove to be a more effective means of improving mobility.



**EXERCISE for Resisted dorsiflexion**

**STEP ONE**

Sit on floor with both knees extended or may be done in sitting or lying if your band is long enough

**STEP TWO**

Loop the middle of the band around one foot and grasp the ends of the band.

**STEP THREE**

Press your other foot down onto the band to stabilize the band.

**STEP FOUR**

Lift the foot of the ankle to be exercised toward your head against the resistance of the band. Slowly return. You can also use the band loop resistance to pull “up and in” or “up and out” to catch all the angle that the foot/ankle need control in.

Foot Drop Braces: Ossur Foot Up brace-available on Amazon; The Richie Dynamic Assist brace; there are a variety available through AliMed. Bracing is best accomplished in conjunction with a formal physical therapist’s evaluation to get the right type and fit.