

**Berkshire Multiple Sclerosis
Therapy Centre**

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Charity No. 800419



Functional Electrical Stimulation





FES is a relatively new approach which helps people with their walking when suffering from drop foot.

With FES, electrical stimulation is provided in a safe way so that a person's leg muscles are activated at the right moment to lift their foot and therefore makes walking easier.

Who is FES for?

FES can potentially help anyone who has a drop foot due to a neurological disorder such as stroke, head injury, spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis or Parkinson's Disease. It is not suitable for people who are pregnant, with heart problems, with poorly controlled epilepsy or with poor skin condition on their legs.

It is also not suitable for people who are unable to walk less than 10 feet independently, but the use of a walking aid is not an exclusion criteria.

If you have any queries regarding your suitability for FES then please contact an FES trained physiotherapist at the centre.



Using F.E.S

The equipment can be used as much or as little as required. It is very individual. Some people will want to use it all day whereas others will use it for specific situations, such as walking longer distances.

Depending on the use of the equipment you may have to replace the battery from time to time and you will be required to change the electrodes roughly every 6 weeks (only when used daily and for any length of time).

You will be responsible to buy the new battery and the new electrodes (which cost £9 per pair and can be bought from the physiotherapists at the centre).

Benefits

There are many benefits from FES for example: It makes walking easier because FES reduces the amount of energy needed to walk. If the muscles that lift the foot can be stimulated into action then there is less need for the body to compensate (i.e. hitching the hip or swinging the leg round to lift the foot through etc.) Therefore it costs the body less energy.

It can prevent muscle wastage due to inactivity and can therefore, with some people, maintain muscle strength and length. It allows a wider choice of footwear since the FES equipment is less bulky than a typical foot drop splint (AFO). The equipment is more discreet and is also lighter than an ordinary splint.

It can prevent falls which are caused by tripping over a foot because FES helps to lift the foot and clear the toes from the floor.

How does F.E.S work?

FES is provided through a control box which is attached to the waistband, with wires leading to small electrodes attached to the lower leg. The box is powered by a battery sending electrical impulses down the wires into the electrodes.

When the electrodes are placed in the correct position, the electrical impulses will stimulate the nerve, which then activates the leg muscles and bring the foot up. This replicates normal nerve and muscle action during walking.

A trigger will be placed inside the shoe, just under the heel, that activates the box when the heel comes off the floor in preparation for taking a step.



An initial assessment is needed to check your suitability for FES and to ensure you are getting the desired result.

If the FES appears suitable and you want to continue using FES, then the centre can give you the equipment on loan for a short period of time for a deposit of £50. If you intend to use the FES on an ongoing basis, then we will require you to purchase the stimulator and its accessories.

At time of press, the FES equipment costs £629 and it can be ordered for you by the therapists at the centre.

It is our aim at the Centre to make this new approach available to you and to give you a chance to try it out.

However, the centre is not able to give the equipment to you, or to lend it to you for a long period of time. The reason for this is that we want to offer the chance of trialling FES to as many members as possible.

In some cases, people have been funded for FES through the NHS, it is therefore worth discussing this with your consultant.

We will supply you with the equipment at the second session. The optimum settings and electrode positions will be finalised at this session, and you will be taught how to put the equipment on and take it off. There will be a review one week later to ensure that the equipment is being used correctly and to solve any problems.

Follow up sessions are necessary at 6 weeks, 3 months and 6 months to ensure that you are getting the best usage out of the equipment.

Booking an initial assessment

For further information on any of the above or to make a booking, call us on **0118 901 6000**

You will then need make an appointment every twelve months to check the settings and the electrode positions so that the equipment works as efficiently as possible.