

# ORTHOSTATIC TREMOR (OT)



## What is it?



Orthostatic tremor (OT) is a rare movement disorder characterized by rapid muscle contractions at a high frequency (13-18 Hz) in the legs and sometimes the torso when standing. The main symptom people with orthostatic tremor report is a feeling of unsteadiness while standing but not while sitting or walking.

## Causes and Treatment

Researchers are still studying orthostatic tremor and don't know its cause, and there's no cure for it. Certain medications may help improve your symptoms. But not everyone responds well to this medication and the effect might wear off after some months or years.

Modifications to your everyday activities may help, like using a shower seat or getting assistance at airport queues.

## How does it feel?

People with OT may not see or sense that their legs are having rapid muscle contractions; it may just feel like unsteadiness, a loss of balance, or an urge to sit down or move.

The tremors typically aren't painful while they're happening, but affected individuals may develop leg muscle pain and stiffness over time.

**WE TAKE  
STANDING FOR  
GRANTED -  
UNTIL IT  
BECOMES  
DIFFICULT**

## Did you know?



A unique feature is the helicopter sound: This is the electrical activity in the leg or arm muscles which generates a sound during an EMG.

## It's like...



...riding a bike – you can ride along at a certain pace, moving slowly means wobbling and standing still doesn't work at all. ...or like trying to stand still on a slackline.

## How is it diagnosed?

If you suspect that you might have OT, you can ask your physician to place a **stethoscope** just a little to the outside of the thigh or of the calf. In case of OT you can hear the helicopter sound.

Another way to identify OT is with **smartphone apps** using the accelerometer feature.

The diagnosis can be confirmed by assessing the electrical activity in the leg or arm muscles with a **surface EMG while standing**.

***You may have to advocate for yourself, but getting the right diagnosis is worth it.***

## Where can I find more information?

[Orthostatic Tremor Network Website](#)

[Local Support Groups](#)

[Facebook Primary Orthostatic Tremor Support Group](#)

[Cleveland Clinic: Orthostatic Tremor](#)

[Hidden Disabilities Sunflower ID Card](#)

