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Biomechanics for inclusive urban design : effects of tactile paving on older adults' gait when crossing the street

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1 **Biomechanics for inclusive urban design: effects of tactile**
2 **paving on older adults' gait when crossing the street.**
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44 **crossing the street.**

45

46 **Abstract**

47 In light of our ageing population it is important that the urban environment is easily accessible and
48 hence supports older adults' independence. Tactile 'blister' paving was originally designed to
49 provide guidance for visually impaired people at pedestrian crossings. However, as research links
50 irregular surfaces to falls in older adults, such paving may have an adverse effect on older people.
51 We investigated the effects of tactile paving on older adults' gait in a scenario closely resembling
52 "crossing the street". Gait analysis of 32 healthy older adults showed that tactile, as compared to
53 smooth, paving increases the variability in timing of foot placement by 20%, thereby indicating a
54 disturbance of the rhythmic gait pattern. Moreover, toe-clearance during the swing phase increased
55 by 7% on tactile paving, and the ability to stop upon cue from the traffic light was compromised.
56 These results need to be viewed under consideration of the limitations associated with laboratory
57 studies and real world analysis is needed to fully understand their implications for urban design.

58

59 **1. Introduction**

60 In light of our ageing population and rapid expansion of the oldest-old group (age >85) (Christensen
61 et al., 2009), it is important that the urban environment is easily accessible. As part of 'inclusive
62 design' policies, tactile 'blister' paving was designed to provide guidance for visually impaired and
63 blind people at sites such as pedestrian crossings. However, a report by the UK Health & Safety
64 Laboratory (HSL2005/07) questioned whether tactile blister paving may lead to trips in older adults
65 due to the height of the blisters. Tactile paving may be considered manmade uneven ground and we
66 know that walking on uneven ground is associated with falls (Berg et al., 1997). Only one study has
67 investigated gait on tactile paving (Kobayashi et al., 2005): increased toe height during swing and

68 increased hip flexion moment were the major gait changes attributed to tactile paving. While useful,
69 the conclusions were limited by the healthy young test population.

70

71 To date, no study has investigated the gait of older adults on tactile paving nor the effect of tactile
72 paving on measures of gait that are associated with stability and falls-risk in older adults. Our
73 objective was to develop a laboratory platform closely resembling a pedestrian crossing, and to
74 investigate suitable gait parameters in older adults on smooth and tactile paving.

75

76 A number of studies have identified relationships between biomechanical variables, measured
77 during walking on smooth or irregular surfaces, and fear of falling, gait stability, and falls risk. For
78 example, reduced gait speed has been associated with fear of falling in older adults, while walking
79 with a wider stride appeared to be linked to falling and fear of falling (Maki, 1997). Similarly,
80 investigations of surface effects in healthy young and older adults showed that for walking on
81 uneven, as compared to even, ground, step width and toe-clearance increased and speed decreased
82 (Menant et al., 2008; Menant et al., 2009). These gait adaptations in response to uneven ground
83 were interpreted as a more cautious gait allowing for stabilization of the torso and visual field and
84 avoidance of tripping hazards. Hence we tested the primary hypothesis that older adults exhibit a
85 more conservative gait on tactile blister paving compared to smooth paving, i.e. when negotiating
86 the 5mm-high protruding blister domes they would decrease their speed, increase their step width,
87 and increase their toe-clearance in mid-swing.

88

89 Walking stability requires continuous control of the whole-body centre of mass in response to the
90 changing boundaries of the base of support. This can be achieved via adjustments of foot placement
91 and also via changes in timing of foot placement. With regard to the former, a study of young adults
92 found that step width became more variable when walking with eyes closed, suggesting that
93 variations in step width are indicative of control of frontal plane balance (Bauby and Kuo, 2000).

94 With regard to the latter, increased variability of step/stride time has been associated with increased
95 falls-risk (Hausdorff et al., 2001) and is elevated in balance impaired adults, in particular on uneven
96 ground (Richardson et al., 2004; DeMott et al., 2007). These studies highlight that subjects respond
97 with increased temporal and spatial adjustments in foot placement when balance is challenged.
98 Tactile blister paving with its protruding blister domes may similarly pose a challenge to balance
99 control, hence we tested the secondary hypothesis that tactile pavement, compared to smooth
100 pavement, would increase spatial (step width) and temporal (step time) gait variability.
101
102 Finally, we investigated step length, step length variability, and the timing of minimum toe
103 clearance during the swing phase, and we explored whether tactile paving would decrease an older
104 person's ability to successfully stop within the boundary of the curb.

105

106 **2. Methods**

107 **2.1. Test platform**

108 The platform was built according to the UK's Department for Transport (DoT) guidelines for an
109 in-line controlled crossing (Figure 1). This allowed for an investigation of the effects of tactile
110 paving on gait when the paving is sited and laid as prescribed in the guidelines. Consequently,
111 the platform consisted of two flat sections, followed by a ramp and dropped curb that leads onto
112 a simulated street. Sections of the platform could be moved to enable either a smooth or tactile
113 paving scenario. Each section had a stiff underlying plywood skeleton that supported the weight
114 of the paving slabs. In further correspondence with the UK DoT guidelines, the blisters on the
115 tactile paving slabs were 25mm in diameter and 0.5mm in height, and were distributed
116 uniformly with a distance of 66.8mm from one blister's midpoint to the next. A pedestrian
117 traffic light was controlled by two pairs of infrared light beams that, if inadvertently broken by
118 the feet of the walking participant, switched the light to red. The first infrared beam was at the
119 start of the ramp section and the other 40cm down the ramp. The two different positions allowed

120 for an ‘early’ or ‘late’ instruction for the participant to stop before stepping onto the ‘street’ (i.e.
121 with a remaining distance to the curb of 1.2m and 0.8m, for early and late trigger, respectively).
122 A safety harness system was installed over the length of the test platform.
123

123

124 **2.2. Experiment**

125 **2.2.1. Participants**

126 The study was approved by the institutional ethics committee. Thirty-two healthy,
127 independently-living older adults (Table 1) gave informed consent and participated.

128 Inclusion criteria were 1) age>60 years; 2) able to walk household distances without an
129 assistive device; 3) walking in the community at least once per week; 4) no history of head
130 injury, concussion, stroke, or diabetes; 5) no visual disorders not correctable by glasses; 6)
131 no history of central or peripheral nerve dysfunction.
132

132

133 **2.2.2. Clinical assessment**

134 Participants were screened for peripheral nerve dysfunction using the Michigan Diabetes
135 Neuropathy Score (Feldman et al., 1994) and for central nerve dysfunction using tests of
136 rapid alternating movements such as finger and toe tapping and heel-to-shin and finger-to-
137 nose manoeuvres. Participants were also asked to perform the alternate step test, sit-to-stand
138 test, and 6m-walk and their self-reported fall history was recorded (Tiedemann et al., 2008).
139

139

140 **2.2.3. Protocol**

141 Participants were randomly allocated into group A or B and provided with standard shoes
142 representative of older adult’s footwear (Hotter Comfort Concept shoes). Group A began
143 with 15 walking trials on tactile paving, followed by 15 on smooth paving; group B
144 proceeded in the reverse order. Prior to data collection participants received two practice
145 trials (one continuous walking trial and one stop trial). They were then instructed to walk at

146 their comfortable speed and observe the light, and to stop without stepping onto the “street”
147 if the light turned red. Three different scenarios were each presented five times in a random
148 order, for each paving condition (smooth and tactile):

149

150 i) continuous walking: the participant proceeds along the walkway uninterrupted;

151 ii) walking & stopping with an “early” trigger of the light (at the start of the ramp, 1.2 m
152 before the curb);

153 iii) walking & stopping with a “late” trigger of the light (40cm into the ramp, 0.8 m before
154 the curb).

155

156 **2.3. Data collection & processing**

157 Kinematic data were collected at 100 Hz with a 3D motion analysis system (Qualisys,
158 Gothenburg, Sweden) and state changes of the green/red light recorded via the same system.
159 Marker data were passed forward and backward through a fourth-order Butterworth filter
160 (MATLAB[®]) with a 7 Hz cutoff frequency. During dynamic motion capture (recording of
161 walking trials) one reflective marker was placed on the waist (over the L3 vertebra), one on
162 each heel at the most posterior point of each shoe approximately 2cm below the level of the
163 maleoli, and a cluster of 3 markers was located on the rigid toecap of each shoe, distal to the
164 shoe crease line. To allow reconstruction of the shoes’ underside in these walking trials, a
165 ‘static’ recording of the shoes alone provided data to locate additional markers placed on the
166 sole of each shoe in relation to the toecap markers; the former were removed for the walking
167 trials. A further ‘static’ recording captured the geometry of the test platform to allow for
168 identification of foot positioning relative to the flat, ramp, curb and street areas.

169

170

171

172 **2.4. Gait parameter analysis – continuous walking trials**

173 During continuous walking trials data were collected over the paving area only (flat and ramp
174 section). Data were therefore analysed at comfortable walking speed, excluding periods of
175 acceleration and deceleration over the 2m approach and 4m street section.

176 **2.4.1. Comfortable speed**

177 The first derivative of the waist marker's position data, recorded along the direction of
178 forward progression, was used to obtain gait speed, defined as the average walking velocity
179 while the participant had both feet fully on the pavement area of the platform.

180

181 **2.4.2. Step time, width and length**

182 Heel and toe markers were used to identify heel strike and toe-off (O'Connor et al., 2007)
183 and subsequently to obtain step time ('ST'). Step width ('SW') and length ('SL') during
184 dual support were calculated from the position data of the heel markers. Parameter
185 variability ('STVar', 'SWVar', 'SLVar') was characterized by the coefficient of variation.
186 There are 11 possibilities of foot positioning with at least one foot on the paving area for
187 which ST, SW and SL can be calculated (Figure 2). To investigate the effects of tactile
188 paving on step parameters the following approach was taken:

189

190 *Analysis 1:* According to the UK DoT guidelines, tactile paving at controlled crossing
191 points should be laid over a 1.2m x 1.2m long flat section followed by a 1.2m x 1.2m long
192 ramp section that leads down to the curb. Therefore, to assess the gross effect of tactile
193 paving on gait when laid according to guidelines, parameters were calculated, for both
194 tactile and smooth paving conditions, for steps where both feet were at least partially on this
195 area as defined by heel and/or toe-markers being on sections 2 and/or 3 (steps of type C, D,
196 E, F, G, H, I – see Figure 2).

197 *Analysis 2:* To assess whether the effects of tactile paving on gait parameters are more
198 apparent on the flat or the ramp section, a second analysis was undertaken: parameters were
199 calculated separately for steps with both feet entirely on the flat paving area (D), for steps
200 cleanly transitioning from the flat to the ramp (F) and for steps with both feet entirely on the
201 ramp (H). Participants had to provide a minimum of 4 steps (i.e. exhibit a step of a given
202 type in at least 4 out of 5 trials) to be included in any step type’s assessment. Hence only a
203 subset of participants contributed to each part of ‘Analysis 2’.

204

205 **2.4.3. Toe-clearance**

206 Minimum-toe-clearance distributions are typically skewed (Begg et al., 2007), hence the
207 median and inter-quartile-range (IQR) for each participant served as measures of toe-
208 clearance (‘TC’) and toe-clearance variability (‘TCVar’). Using the static data locating the
209 sole markers with respect to the toe-marker-clusters (Best and Begg, 2008), the positions of
210 the sole markers were reconstructed for the dynamic walking trials (Cappozzo et al., 1995).
211 Minimum-toe-clearance during swing (see Figures 3 & 4) was defined as the minimum
212 distance between the reconstructed sole marker position, plus the marker’s radius, and the
213 top of the test platform (for blister paving: the top of the 5mm-high protruding blisters). The
214 timing of minimum-toe-clearance (TCT) was determined as % swing phase. Two different
215 analyses were performed:

216 *Analysis 1:* toe-clearance values obtained within the boundaries of the entire pavement area.

217 *Analysis 2:* toe-clearance values obtained within the boundaries of the flat pavement area
218 and, separately, for values obtained within the boundaries of the ramp pavement area.

219

220 **2.5. Gait parameter analysis – stop trials**

221 Since it was possible that triggering of a red light (‘stop’) occurred at a different time in the gait
222 cycle for one paving condition versus the other, the time elapsed between the light turning red

223 and the preceding heel strike was obtained as a covariate. Similarly, participants' gait speed was
224 monitored before the light was triggered. Hence, the ability to stop successfully within the curb
225 boundary could be interpreted in conjunction with initial gait speed and timing of the light-
226 trigger with respect to the gait cycle. The final foot positioning was investigated once the waist
227 marker velocity was $<0.05\text{m/s}$ (Cao et al., 1997) and a successful stop was defined by all toe
228 marker x-positions lying within the curb boundary.

229

230 **2.6. Statistical analyses**

231 **2.6.1. Continuous walking**

232 Each participant walked on smooth and tactile paving and did so for 5 trials, resulting in
233 multiple data points being obtained for each of the variables "V". To characterize the
234 average performance of each participant, the median (toe-clearance; Begg at al., 2007) OR
235 the mean (all other variables) were obtained for each participant. Similarly, to characterize
236 the variability in performance of each participant, the inter-quartile-range (toe-clearance;
237 Begg at al., 2007) OR the coefficient of variation (all other variables) were obtained. All
238 values were checked for normality and where the normality condition was not met, the
239 variable was transformed using the natural log and normality of the data was established.
240 Any difference between the smooth and tactile paving conditions was defined as:

241

$$242 \Delta V = V_{\text{Tactile}} - V_{\text{Smooth}}$$

243

244 Using Δ variables for statistical analysis of all gait parameters allowed for each participant
245 serving as their own control and retained the advantage of a paired sample. A univariate
246 general linear model (GLM) was chosen to analyse each Δ variable as the dependent
247 variable.

248

249 Walking speed was considered to have a potential interaction effect on the influence of
250 paving type. To investigate this, all other gait parameters were assessed a second time with
251 the GLM, this time in conjunction with two speed covariates: 1) a measure of each subject's
252 "baseline speed", and 2) a measure of their "speed adaptation" from smooth to tactile
253 paving. With regard to the former covariate, their self-selected walking speed on smooth
254 paving was adjusted by subtracting the groups' mean speed on smooth paving from each
255 individual's speed. With regard to the latter covariate, the ratio of the speed obtained on
256 tactile to the speed obtained on smooth paving was calculated for each individual. Again, the
257 groups' mean ratio was subtracted from each individual's ratio. With this centring, when the
258 covariates take their average values, the intercept becomes the estimate of the Δ dependent
259 variable. The effect of "centring" the covariates in this way is thus to give the regression
260 intercept (constant term) a physical meaning.

261

262 **2.6.2. Stop trials**

263 If the participants executed the stop successfully a value of 1 was scored (0 if unsuccessful).
264 For the 32 participants a total of 320 observations were made (32 participants x 5 trials x 2
265 paving types). These data were analysed with a mixed-effects logistic regression to model
266 the probability of a successful stop as a function of paving type. Each person provided 5
267 observations for each paving type. However, because each individual has an 'intrinsic
268 frailty', causing them to fail to stop more or less often than others, these repeated
269 observations must not be considered independent measurements. Hence the individual
270 person was modelled as a random effect in the mixed-effects logistic regression.

271

272 Moreover, walking speed prior to the light trigger and the time elapsed since the last heel
273 strike up to the moment the light turned red can be considered initial conditions in this part
274 of the experiment. Hence, each individual's mean prior walking speed and mean time

275 elapsed were obtained, for each type of paving; and for both variables the ratio of tactile
276 paving to smooth paving was derived, reflecting the change from smooth to tactile paving
277 for each individual. As described before, the data were “centred” and the effect of paving
278 type on successful stopping was determined once more, this time with the adjusted ratios
279 serving as covariates in the mixed-effects logistic regression.

280

281 **3. Results**

282 **3.1. Continuous walking**

283 In ‘Analysis 1’ (flat & ramp data combined) an average of 14 steps on each type of paving were
284 obtained for every participant. STVar, SWVar and SLVar as well as TCT during the swing
285 phase did not pass checks for normality and were hence transformed using the natural log scale
286 prior to statistical analyses. On both paving types the group walked at a similar speed (Δ speed =
287 -0.02m/s, $p=0.20$, Table 2) The TCT during the swing phase remained also comparable on
288 smooth and tactile paving as did ST, SW, SWVar, SLVar, and TCVar ($p>0.1$, Table 2). In
289 contrast, STVar and TC were increased on tactile as compared to smooth paving (by 20% and
290 7%, respectively, Table 2) while SL was decreased by 1.2% (Table 2). Whilst speed was similar
291 on both paving types, the two speed-based covariates affected the statistical analyses as can be
292 seen in the changes in p-values in Table 2. More specifically, a faster baseline speed was
293 associated with reduced STVar ($p=0.01$) and higher TC ($p=0.03$). Similarly, adapting a faster
294 speed on tactile as compared to smooth paving (as defined by the speed ratio) was likewise
295 associated with reduced STVar ($p=0.04$) and also with longer steps ($p<0.001$).

296 Between 11 and 32 participants provided the required minimum of 4 steps to be included in
297 ‘Analysis 2’, and the exact number varied for assessment of different platform sections and for
298 different gait parameters. Analysis 2 showed that paving type had a significant effect on STVar
299 on the ramp ($p=0.034$, 12 participants), and on TC height on the flat section ($p=0.006$, 32
300 participants). Participants were more variable in the timing of foot placement on the ramp

301 section before reaching the curb, and they lifted their feet higher on the flat section, i.e. when
302 beginning to walk on tactile paving. Moreover, in response to tactile paving, SL was found to be
303 increased for steps taken entirely on the flat ($p=0.007$, 19 participants) or ramp ($p=0.026$, 13
304 participants) section, but not for steps transitioning from the flat paving onto the ramp ($p=0.186$,
305 12 participants). Interestingly, when analysing data obtained on the flat and ramp section
306 separately, we found that the TCT was after all affected by paving type: on tactile as compared
307 to smooth paving TCT occurred earlier in the swing phase on the flat platform section ($p=0.032$,
308 32 participants) but later in the swing phase on the ramp section ($p=0.003$, 32 participants).

309

310 **3.2. Stop trials**

311 For the “early” light trigger, only two unsuccessful stops (of 320 observed) were recorded, one
312 on each type of paving. Hence the data were not processed further. For the “late” light trigger
313 the mixed-effect logistic regression showed that paving type had a significant effect on
314 successful stopping ($p=0.003$): participants stopped less successfully on tactile paving with the
315 number of unsuccessful stops increasing from 7% on smooth paving to 15% on tactile paving.
316 The p-value did not change when entering the two covariates “speed ratio” and “trigger timing
317 ratio” into the mixed-effects logistic regression as neither showed an effect on successful
318 stopping ($p=0.87$ and $p=0.59$, respectively). However, it needs to be noted that the standard
319 deviation of the regression constant term was large (Estimate = 3.59, $p=0.002$), indicating that
320 some participants contributed more to this outcome than others due to differences in their
321 ‘intrinsic frailty’ (Figure 5).

322

323 **4. Discussion**

324 This is the first study to report on gait during a scenario that closely resembles street-crossing in the
325 presence of tactile paving. Low variability in timing of foot placement is characteristic of
326 automated, rhythmic walking and considered an indicator of safe gait in absence of perturbations.

327 One of the key outcomes of this study is that on tactile paving rhythmic gait becomes more variable,
328 indicating that balance is challenged (Hausdorff et al., 2001; Richardson et al., 2004; DeMott et al.,
329 2007). Moreover, a subset of 12 subjects that provided steps of type D, F and H demonstrated that
330 the increased variability in timing of foot placement on tactile paving is most evident on the ramp
331 section right before the curb, i.e. at a point where movement control is most crucial.

332 Simultaneously, we found that for the late trigger of the traffic light the ability to stop without
333 stepping onto the “street” was reduced on tactile paving. Furthermore, in accordance with previous
334 work (Kobayashi et al., 2005), we found that participants lifted their feet higher on tactile as
335 compared to smooth paving when walking on the flat platform section. Such strategy can be viewed
336 a successful functional adaption that reduces the risk of tripping. It is noteworthy that the
337 participants in this study indeed overcompensated as they increased their TC approximately 2mm
338 beyond the 2.5mm blister height, which may indicate that tactile paving is perceived to increase risk
339 of tripping. Finally, an interesting effect of tactile paving on gait was that minimum toe-clearance
340 occurred earlier in the swing phase for steps taken on the flat platform section but later in the swing
341 phase for steps taken on the ramp. This implies that mechanisms for increasing TC on tactile paving
342 are different for level and ramp walking, and this merits further study.

343

344 SW and SWVar were not affected by paving type, suggesting that participants remained stable in
345 the frontal plane and did not have to increase their base of support. Furthermore, participants did not
346 adopt a slower gait speed on tactile paving, an outcome that would have indicated fear of falling
347 (Maki, 1997). However, this finding may be compromised by our use of a harness: participants
348 were aware they had protection in the event of a fall. Interestingly, a post-hoc analysis revealed that
349 SW adaptation differed between fallers and non-fallers: fallers decreased their SW on tactile paving
350 ($p=0.014$; CI: -1.6 to -0.2) while non-fallers did not show significant SW adaptation ($p=0.177$; CI: -
351 0.3 to 1.3) and this group difference was associated with a p-value of 0.015. No other group
352 differences were found.

353 As others report (Beauchet et al., 2009), a faster walking speed was associated with reduced STVar.
354 Moreover, a faster speed was associated with higher TC. It is noteworthy that the decrease in SL on
355 tactile paving was associated with a p-value of 0.005, ST and comfortable gait speed, however, had
356 p-values greater than 0.1 (though as expected step time showed a corresponding increase and speed
357 a decrease). These larger p-values can be explained by greater variability (i.e. standard errors) for
358 ST and speed.

359

360 It is important to note that we did not see a gross effect of tactile paving across all parameters
361 investigated, and none of our participants fell. However, this study represents the ideal world: the
362 paving was in perfect condition, laid according to the Department for Transport guidelines, was dry
363 and well lit. Our participants were healthy older adults without impairments that may have
364 compromised their mobility. The conservative nature of this experimental design allowed us to
365 establish a baseline with regard to the Department for Transport guidelines on tactile paving and its
366 effect on healthy older adult gait. That we found some effects of tactile paving on gait parameters in
367 this perfect scenario leads us to speculate that larger effects may be observed in the real world
368 where paving is often laid contrary to guidelines, is subject to wear and tear, and may be wet or icy.
369 Additional work in the real world is hence required and an observational study on how tactile
370 paving is actually sited is underway. Moreover, future work needs to investigate the effects of
371 tactile paving on more vulnerable parts of the population that have balance impairments, for
372 example, due to stroke, diabetes and/or neuropathy. Finally, the underlying mechanisms (Thies et
373 al. 2006) by which tactile paving affects gait during the stance phase merit further investigation.

374

375 Safe ambulation in the community is crucial to older adults' independence & quality of life, and
376 gait analysis can support good urban design. The research team is part of a larger consortium that
377 aims to identify aspects of design that may help or hinder older people in using the outdoors. Hence
378 only older adults were tested and conclusions are consequently limited to this population. The

379 results of our analysis provide insights into the effects of tactile paving on gait in older people
380 crossing the street and the experimental setup developed for this baseline study could be further
381 utilized to assess alternative paving slab designs. Moreover, we believe that a similar approach
382 could also be applied to other urban design problems. Further analysis in the real world (with
383 inertial sensors) is pending to substantiate these findings.

384

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387

388 **6. References**

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439 **7. Conflict of interest statement**

440 The authors declare no financial or personal relationship with any organization or people that would
441 influence the outcomes of this study.

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443 **8. Tables**

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445

Table 1. Subjects - descriptive data. SD: standard deviation.

<u>Gender</u>	
Male	11 participants
Female	21 participants
<u>Age</u>	
Mean	72 years
SD	6 years
Range	63:85 years
<u>Walking Outdoors</u>	
Every day	20 participants
Several days per week	12 participants
<u>Falls in last 12 months</u>	
None	21 participants
One	9 participants
Two	2 participants
<u>Sit-to-Stand*</u>	
≤ 12 sec	19 participants
≥ 12 sec	13 participants
<u>Alternate-step-test*</u>	
≤ 10 sec	21 participants
≥ 10 sec	11 participants
<u>Six-metre-walk*</u>	
≤ 6 sec	31 participants
≥ 6sec	1 participant

* Tiedemann A et al. 2008

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Table 2. Parameters (group mean ± group std) and p-values for Analysis 1 (data for flat and ramp section combined). A univariate general linear model was used for analysis of the dependent Δ variables. Note: p-values remain unchanged for use of standard deviation as the variability measure.

	Smooth Paving	Tactile Paving	P	P (with speed covariates)
Speed (m/s)	1.13 ± 0.17	1.11 ± 0.19	0.204	---
ST (sec)	0.55 ± 0.05	0.56 ± 0.06	0.275	0.272
STVar [†]	0.035 ± 0.010	0.042 ± 0.015	0.005*	0.002*
SW (cm)	16.86 ± 2.65	16.95 ± 2.73	0.763	0.766
SWVar [†]	0.17 ± 0.06	0.17 ± 0.07	0.825	0.818
SL (cm)	55.47±5.32	54.82±5.41	0.025*	0.005*
SLVar (cm)	0.063±0.02	0.068±0.04	0.741	0.697
TC (cm)	2.34 ± 1.22	2.50 ± 0.97	0.053	0.042*
TCVar [‡] (cm)	1.27 ± 0.81	1.20 ± 0.96	0.313	0.306
TCT (% swing)	49.56±3.04	50.20±3.94	0.249	0.264

[†] Coefficient of variation; [‡] Inter-quartile-range; * P < 0.05 considered significant for Δ variable.

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455 **9. Figure captions**

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457 **Figure 1.** In-line controlled crossing as set up in the Human Performance Laboratory. Dimensions
458 are in units of metres. Notice the cut-outs on each platform section designed for manoeuvring with a
459 pallet truck. Locations of two sets of infrared light beams, used for changing the light from green to
460 red, are also shown.

461 **Figure 2.** Illustration of the different platform sections (1: flat even approach; 2: flat paving; 3:
462 ramp; 4: street) and possible foot positioning during dual support (A to K). Participants may exhibit
463 different combinations of foot positions, i.e. combinations where one foot is on the border of two
464 platform sections (top) and combinations where each foot is fully on one section (bottom).

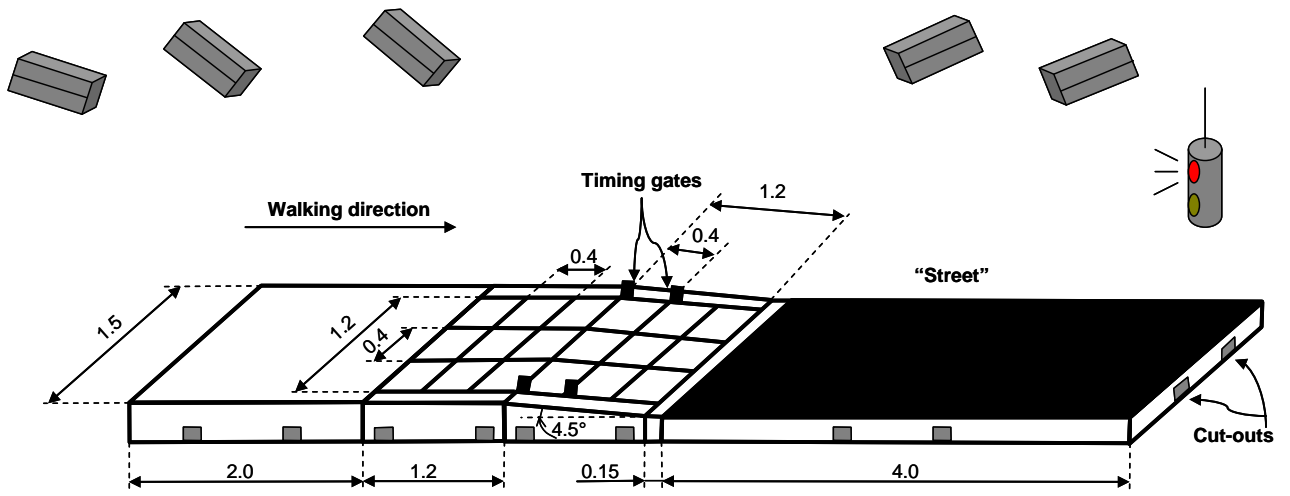
465 **Figure 3.** Side view: minimum-toe-clearance (“TC”) shown for both the flat and ramp sections of
466 the test platform. TC is defined as the perpendicular distance between the platform surface and a
467 reconstructed “virtual” sole marker plus the sole marker’s radius ‘r’. Note: d is the distance between
468 the camera system’s origin and the start of the ramp, known from the static trial that defines the
469 platform geometry; α is determined by the slope 1:12; and X_{TCM} and Z_{TCM} are coordinates of the
470 reconstructed sole marker at any given frame of a walking trial, derived via the CAST technique
471 that utilizes a static calibration trial of that marker’s position with respect to three markers on the
472 toe cap.

473 **Figure 4.** Illustration of the reconstructed sole marker trajectory and values of minimum-toe-
474 clearance (o).

475 **Figure 5.** Illustration of the effect of ‘intrinsic frailty’ on number of successful stops performed on
476 smooth and tactile paving for the late light trigger. Given that subject performed five stop trials on
477 each paving type a perfect score (no failed stops on either paving) is reflected by data points on the
478 45° line at the coordinate [5, 5]. Data points above the 45° line reflect a greater number of failed
479 stops on tactile paving while data points below the 45° line reflect a greater number of failed stops
480 on smooth paving.

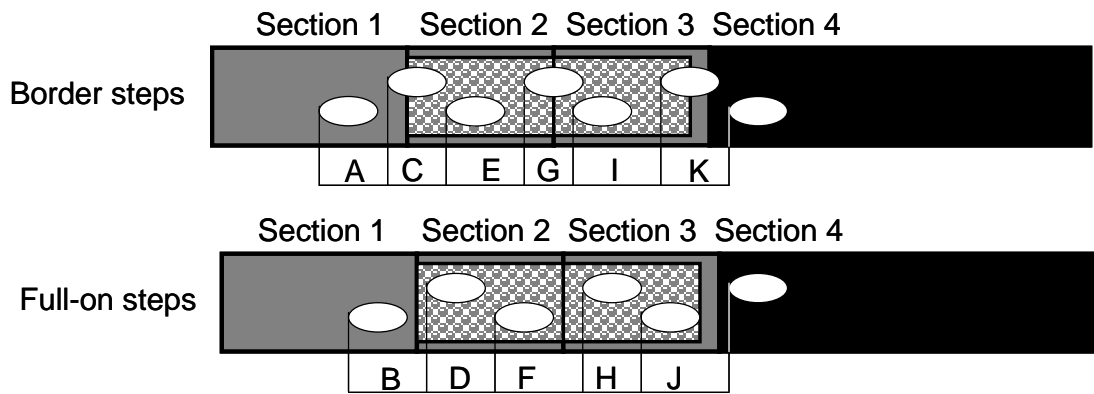
481 10. Figures

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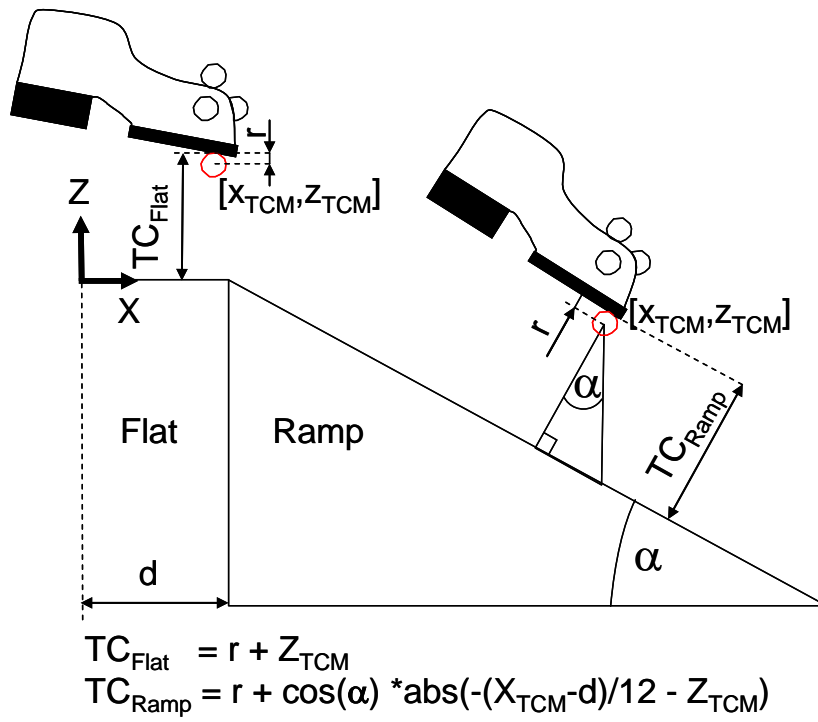
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Figure 1.



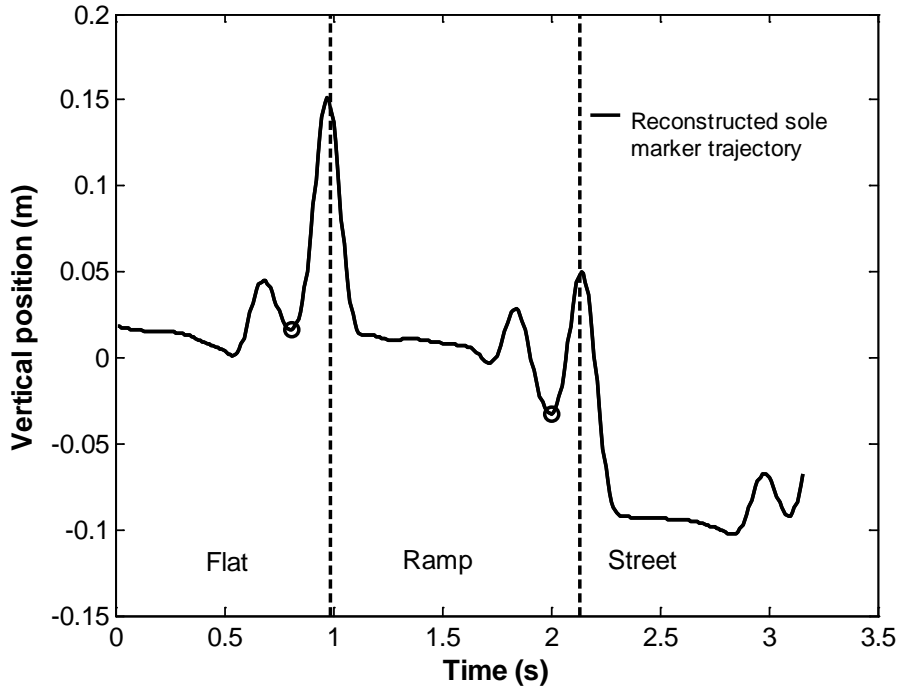
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Figure 2.



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Figure 3.



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Figure 4.

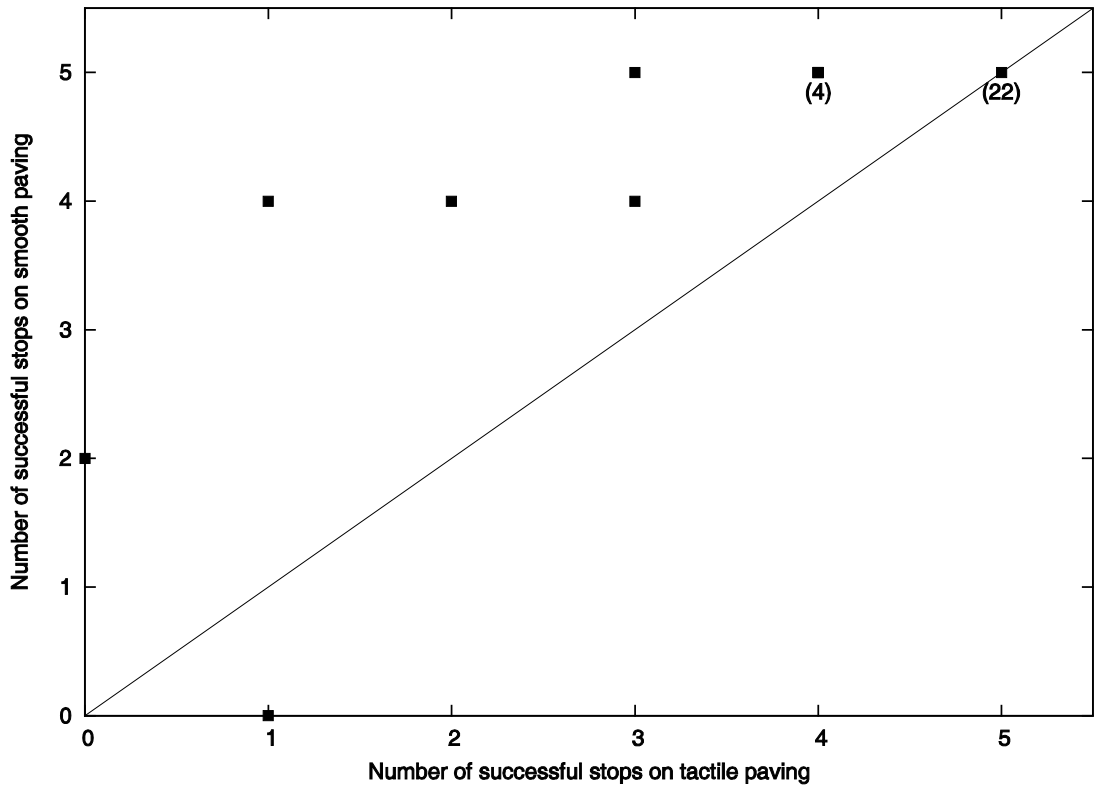


Figure 5.

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