



Ankle Foot Orthosis (AFO)

Use and Care Instructions

An AFO is a custom molded plastic brace designed to stabilize weak muscles, immobilize painful joints, or correct the position of the foot and ankle.

How to use your Ankle Foot Orthosis

- Wear with a lace up shoe that has enough room for both your foot and the AFO to fit comfortably. Pay attention to the heel height: this will affect both the alignment and the way you walk. The heel height should be the same on all your shoes
- Wear a cotton sock between your skin and the AFO. The sock will absorb perspiration and help protect your skin. A long sock that folds back over the top of the AFO is best
- **PUTTING ON YOUR AFO:** Position the AFO on your leg and slip your foot and the AFO together into your shoe, **OR**, place the AFO into your shoe first, then slide your foot into the AFO and shoe, using the AFO like a shoe horn.
- When you first try to walk with your AFO, you may feel awkward. Practice in your home or with your physical therapist before walking outside
- Begin wearing AFO 1 hour at a time, then remove and rest your leg. Alternate wearing AFO and resting your leg for the first several days. Become used to wearing the AFO gradually. Slowly increase your wearing time over the next several days.
- It is **VERY** important to check your foot and ankle for any red pressure areas. Any red area that does not fade after 20 minutes should be watched carefully. This is especially important for patients who are diabetic with poor sensation in their feet. Call your orthotist with any concerns
- Do not feel discouraged if you feel an adjustment is needed. This is not unusual as minor adjustments may be required for optimum fit
- The knee joint may be locked or unlocked. Always be sure, when standing, that both joints are locked. One (1) locked joint will cause the orthosis to be unstable

How to care for your AFO

- Clean the thermoplastic sections at least once a week using mild soap, and rinse well.
- Metal joints will require periodic lubrication, ask your orthotist what type to use

Important notes about your AFO

An AFO is a very specialized device and it **VERY** important to keep all scheduled follow up appointments made by your orthotist. Please do not hesitate to schedule an appointment should any problems arise. **SELF EXAMINATION:** A properly fit orthosis will exert a firm steady pressure and should never cause sharp or stabbing pain, bruises or blisters.