

Care and Handling

Ankle-Foot Orthoses are among the most commonly prescribed lower limb orthoses. Your Ankle-Foot Orthosis (AFO) has been custom designed for you to help correct and maintain the proper alignment and position of your ankle and foot. Fitted with many purposes in mind including controlling or correcting alignment, increasing mobility and independence, assisting in rehabilitation, reducing pain and preventing deformity, your AFO is customized to you and we ask that you partner with us to ensure your comfort and success. Please take note of the following guidelines:

Socks:

- Socks should be worn at all times under your AFO to reduce friction with the skin and protect from excessive perspiration. Natural fiber (i.e. cotton) socks are preferred as they allow for better air circulation and absorption of moisture.
- Socks should be the same length as the AFO and pulled taut enough to be wrinkle-free without placing excess pressure on the toes.

Application:

- Step into your AFO and push your heel down and back firmly into the heel of the AFO. Make sure that all straps are fastened securely.
- Once the AFO is on you can now put on your shoes. Your AFO was designed to be worn with shoes.
- A properly fitting orthosis will exert a firm, steady pressure similar to an open palm hand against the skin. You may experience slight discomfort as you adjust to your new orthosis. If you feel severe discomfort, remove the orthosis and contact your orthotist. Keep in mind that your new AFO is like a new pair of shoes and will take a few weeks to achieve a comfortable fit.

Shoes:

- Select good shoes with proper support. Your shoes should have a **closed toe and heel design** and possibly offer greater width to accommodate the AFO. Tennis shoes are ideal as they often offer greater width and depth.
- Always try shoes on with your AFO to ensure a comfortable fit. Remove the insert of the shoe when possible and if necessary to improve comfort.

Wear Time:

- As you adjust to your AFO, your orthotist will outline a specific schedule of wear that is individualized to you.
- Please follow these guidelines for optimal results:**

Skin:

- **Wash your skin daily** with soap and water paying special attention to the areas between your toes and the bottoms of your feet where bacteria tends to collect.
 - **Examine your skin.** Daily examination of the skin under your orthosis should become a habit.
 - After you remove your AFO check for areas of redness, swelling or irritation. A new AFO may cause some redness which should disappear within 15minutes of removing the brace. If areas of redness/irritation persist contact your orthotist immediately.
- **People with diabetes, vascular insufficiency or neuropathy are especially vulnerable to skin irritation, particularly in bony areas or on the bottom of the foot. Careful examination and attention to the foot should be given **daily** to keep from developing any serious conditions.**

AFO:

- Clean regularly** with a solution of ½ isopropyl alcohol ½ water using a clean cotton towel. Towel dry and leave to dry thoroughly at room temperature.
- If any part of your orthosis becomes cracked or worn make an appointment with your orthotist for repair. Do not attempt to repair or adjust your AFO yourself!**
- Your orthosis was custom made for you at the time of your fitting. Any major changes in weight may cause improper fit and should be brought to the attention of your orthotist. Similarly, if you think your child is outgrowing their orthosis, contact your orthotist immediately.

Please contact us with any questions, any time!

Patient

Orthotist