

MOLDED PLASTIC ANKLE FOOT ORTHOSIS (AFO)
USE & CARE INSTRUCTIONS

These instructions are intended to help ensure successful use of your molded plastic Ankle Foot Orthosis (AFO). While being fitted with your AFO, the Orthotist provided instructions on how to wear and use the orthosis effectively. Some points to remember:

SOCKS

1. The AFO should always be worn with a clean medium weight sock.
2. Pull the sock snugly, confirming that it is free of wrinkles before putting on your AFO.
3. Do not pull your socks too tightly over your toes. Toes should be free to wiggle.

SHOES

1. The AFO should be worn with a shoe at all times. The plastic is too slippery to be worn without a shoe.
2. Wear shoes with an adjustable closure: Laces (preferred) or Velcro closures. Tennis shoes and wide shoes with a high toe box (extra-depth), and removable insoles are optimal.
3. It will be necessary to get a larger and wider shoe, typically ½ to a 1 size longer and one width larger than your current shoes in order to accommodate the AFO.
4. If your shoes need to have modifications to the sole (lifts or wedges), look for soles made of a solid material (no air or gel soles). Notify the sales clerk/manager of your needs as they may have suggestions. Make sure to get their permission in advance to return the shoes if, after our inspection, we find that we are not able to modify the sole materials. Get a name and save your receipt.

DONNING AND DOFFING (Putting-on and taking-off your AFO)

1. Don the orthosis first and then the shoe; the “Brace-first Technique”.
 - i. Place your foot in the orthosis, making sure the heel is all the way down and back before securing the ankle strap, followed by the forefoot strap (if applicable) and the calf strap.
 - ii. If your AFO has a separate molded inner boot (MIB), that should be donned prior to placing your foot, with the MIB, into the AFO, then securing the straps as described above.
 - iii. A strong shoehorn may be helpful in getting the shoe on at this point.
2. In some cases, the AFO can be donned with the “Shoe First Technique”, by placing it into the shoe then (using the AFO like a shoehorn) sliding your foot into the AFO and shoe – as long as the area above the ankles is not too narrow for the ankles to slide through, and no padding in the foot or ankle area that could be damaged as the foot slides along.

WEAR: BREAK-IN AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Initial wear time is 1 hour at a time, 3 times a day: for the first few days, the orthoses should be worn for 1 hour in the morning, 1 hour in the afternoon, and 1 hour in the evening – unless your Orthotist, Therapist or Doctor instructs you otherwise.
2. Wear time can be increased as tolerated by adding 1-2 hours daily, until you are able to wear it all day – if that is the treatment objective. This process should take about 1-2 weeks.

3. The sock should be removed and the skin inspected each time the brace is removed.
4. Make note of any localized redness, especially over bony areas which may require adjustment in that area. Mild redness which is spread out over a wide fleshy area is usually not cause for immediate concern, but it should be monitored closely to confirm that it fades within 30 minutes. Contact our office with any concerns regarding discomfort or skin pressure within the brace (i.e. discoloration which does not fade, callus formation). In the event that a blister develops, discontinue use and contact our office immediately.

FOLLOW-UP

1. The Orthotist will discuss the follow-up plan with you at delivery.
2. Initial follow is important to confirm that the device is fitting and functioning as ordered.
3. We recommend regular follow-up with your practitioner to assess the effectiveness and safety of the device. We encourage you to call immediately if you notice a decrease in effectiveness or comfort, or if there is a change in the performance of your device.
 - a. It is recommended that additional follow-up appointments are arranged every six months for kids and every 12 months for adults.
4. Do not attempt to repair or adjust the AFO yourself.

KEEPING YOUR ORTHOSIS CLEAN

1. The AFO may be gently wiped clean (inside and out) with a soft cloth using water and a mild detergent. Do not scrub with anything abrasive. Rinse thoroughly and towel dry.
2. Clean at least once per week.
3. Inspect the brace daily for signs of wear.
4. Velcro Strap Care: Keep the velcro clean by sticking the straps to themselves when not being worn. Lint build up in the velcro hooks should be removed with a fine-toothed comb or a toothpick. If the velcro is not keeping the straps closed securely, they should be replaced by your Orthotist.
5. Avoid all heat sources, as they can damage or deform the device. Do not place near a heater to dry. Do not leave in the car.

Compliance with instructions and follow-up appointments are very important. At your follow-up appointment your Orthotist will make any necessary 'fine-tuning' adjustments to optimize your comfort and function. It is normal for adjustments to be made to optimize the fit and function of your orthosis.

Your success is very important to us. Please contact our office at (410)-321-6844 if you have any question or concerns about your AFOs.