

Ankle Foot Orthoses (AFOs)

AFOs are prescribed for a number of reasons, including:

- To realign and control the ankle and foot joints
- To provide support to weakened or weakening joints
- To limit or stop abnormal motion
- To provide protection
- To help control abnormal muscle tone

Your AFO is designed to provide support and comfort, and improve your walking pattern. It is prescribed and manufactured to your specific needs. Most AFOs are made of polypropylene plastic of varying thicknesses; some may be made of alternative types of plastic or other materials and may have artificial ankle joints. Your AFO will usually fit along the back of the leg around your ankle and under your foot. It is held on with Velcro straps. AFOs are close fitting to ensure control.

Wearing your AFO

You need to give yourself time to get used to your AFO. Build up the amount of time you wear it each day until it is comfortable. Follow the wearing schedule as provided by your Orthotist. Once it has been broken in you should aim to wear it as much as possible to ensure control and support. Your AFO should not be worn in bed unless specifically prescribed to do so.

Typical wearing in schedule:

Day 1	30 minutes	Day 5-7	2-4 hours
Day 2-4	1-2 hours	Day 8-14	4-6 hours

Caution!

It is normal for there to be some red marking of the skin when you take off your AFO. Often it is where the straps have been fastened. This should disappear within half an hour or so following removal of your AFO. It is also normal to build up a little hard skin, especially on the foot. So long as this is not excessive it is nothing to worry about. It is especially important to check your skin regularly if you have altered sensation.

If there are persistent red marks or blistering, discontinue wearing your AFO until you have contacted the department for advice.

Fitting

When putting on your AFO ensure your heel is right to the back and bottom of the device. The straps should be pulled snug to ensure the AFO does not move around, but not so tight that they are uncomfortable. Wearing a long cotton sock under the AFO will usually make it more comfortable. Please watch the fitting video on our YouTube Channel



Footwear

Your AFO should always be used in a shoe, ensure it is positioned at the back of your footwear when putting it on. Your AFO should preferably be worn in footwear with a fastening i.e lace or Velcro. This will improve control by helping to hold your foot onto the orthosis. The lower down the tongue of the shoe the easier it will be to put over the AFO. Most footwear has removable inlays; these can be taken out and replaced with your AFO should you need extra depth and room to accommodate the device. Take your AFO with you when you are buying new shoes. If your AFO will not fit into your shoes you may need to go for half or a whole size bigger. Footwear should not have a heel more than approximately two and half centimetres (one inch).

Care

Please keep your AFO well maintained:

- You can clean it with a damp cloth and towel dry
- Keep it away from direct heat
- Keep it away from pets
- If the Velcro straps or lining of your orthosis become worn contact the department to arrange repair
- You must not try to adapt the orthosis yourself
- Your AFO has been prescribed for you and shouldn't be given to anyone else

You are responsible for making a review appointment when required.

Recommended date of next inspection: _____

Contact Information:

Appliance Officer _____

Tel: _____

Orthotist _____



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Orthotics Ankle Foot Orthosis (AFO)



Patient Information Leaflet