



Ankle foot orthosis (AFO)

What is an AFO?

AFO stands for ankle foot orthosis. This kind of brace is usually made of plastic. Orthoses are named for the parts of the body they control. An orthosis provides correction, support, or protection to a part of the body.

How do I get used to my new orthosis?

A new orthosis must be broken in slowly. When first wearing your new orthosis, start a little at a time.

- Begin with 2 hours on and one (1) hour off.
- During the next 2 or 3 days, gradually increase the time the orthosis is used until it is being worn for the amount of time that your orthotist or therapist prescribed.



How do I wear my orthosis?

- Always wear a sock or stocking under the orthosis. It reduces rubbing on your skin and helps keep sweat from irritating your skin.
- The sock you wear should be taller than the orthosis. You may even choose to wear a knee-high sock for more comfort.



- Cotton socks allow air to circulate better and absorb sweat. For more comfort, use talcum powder and change your sock after sweating.
- Inspect your socks to ensure they are wrinkle free.
- Be sure that the straps on your orthosis are snug and your heel is completely back in the orthosis to ensure a proper fit.
- Shoes worn with your orthosis should have good support and be the correct heel height for which your orthosis was designed. Ask your orthotist or therapist which shoes are best for your orthosis.
- Do not wear your orthosis barefooted or with slippers, sandals, loafers, or any shoe without a back.

How do I care for my orthosis?

Since your orthosis will be worn for long periods of time, it may become very dirty. The following tips will help you keep it clean:

- Clean your orthosis frequently inside and out with a damp cloth. Let it dry fully before you put it back on.
- Use a towel or let your orthosis dry at room temperature. Do not place your orthosis in front of a heater. Do not use a hair dryer for drying. Do not leave it in the sun or a hot car.
- A solution of one (1) tablespoon of unscented bleach in a gallon of water can be used to clean your orthosis.
- Velcro can be kept clean with soap and water and can be kept free of lint and hair with a wire brush, toothbrush, or fine-toothed comb.
- Metal joints should be lubricated occasionally with silicone spray or a light oil such as WD40® or 3-in-1 Oil®.

How do I care for my skin?

- Any part of the body covered by the orthosis should be washed daily with warm water and mild soap.
- Be sure to clean the bottoms of your feet and between your toes to remove bacteria and dirt.
- Your body should be completely dry before wearing your orthosis.
- Remember to keep socks clean, dry, and wrinkle-free. Inspect skin daily.

Why do I need to examine my skin?

- It should become a habit to inspect your skin daily. People with decreased sense of touch are not as likely to notice that their skin is irritated. This is especially common in bony areas such as the shin or sides of the feet. You should treat even minor irritations.
- An orthosis should provide steady pressure, not sharp pain. Inspect your skin daily for bruises, calluses, or blisters.
- A new orthosis may cause redness, but this should disappear within 15 minutes after the orthotic is removed.
- Swelling may occur after prolonged standing or during hot, humid weather. If this occurs, you should remove the orthosis, sit or lie down, and elevate your leg above your heart until the swelling subsides.



مستشفى التأهيل التخصصي
Specialized
Rehabilitation
Hospital.

Affiliated with
Shirley Ryan
Abilitylab
Formerly the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago

Safety is important!

For your safety, it is important to quickly inspect the orthosis every day.

- Check rivets and screws for tightness.
- Check plastic and metal uprights for cracks.
- Check straps and buckles for proper fit.
- With daytime foot and leg orthoses, shoes should be worn at all times because the footplate is slippery and can cause a trip on uneven surfaces.