



Patient Information
Ankle Foot Orthosis



AFO Prescription

Ankle Foot Orthosis or AFOs are prescribed for a number of reasons which include:

- To hold the ankle or/and foot joints in an ideal position in order to reduce stress on the joints and reduce pain.
- To provide support and protection to weak joints and provide stability.
- To prevent excessive movement which can lead to pain and instability.
- To improve your walking pattern.
- To control increased muscle tone.

The majority of these AFOs are made out of plastic of different thicknesses but can also be made from other materials such as carbon fibre.

Putting on your AFO

We recommend you use a long cotton sock which should be close fitting to avoid any wrinkles but not tight so that it leaves marks.

It is important that your AFO is securely fastened to avoid any pressure or rubbing. Your heel should be placed at the back of the AFO and the heel strap should be fastened securely so that there is no movement between the heel and the AFO. We recommend you keep your knee bent at approximately 90 degrees for easier donning. AFOs should be worn inside footwear and never on their own.

Footwear for AFOs

We recommend you buy low opening footwear to make it easier accommodate the AFO. Velcro or lace fastening shoes or trainers are best, and those with removable innersoles will provide extra depth needed to accommodate the thickness of the AFO. Ideally, the heel height of your shoe or trainer should not exceed 15mm. Check with your Orthotist what the recommended maximum height is. Shoes with high heels will cause your knee to bend and make you more unstable.

Using the AFO

It is not unusual for the AFO to feel uncomfortable to begin with and therefore, we suggest you break it in slowly. Initially we recommend you use the AFO between 30 to 60 minutes and then increase the daily use by 30 to 60 minutes so by day 5 you should be able to wear it for 5 hours without any problems. This may vary depending on your condition, ask your Orthotists for further information if needed.

The likelihood is that you will get red marks from the straps and some of the edges of the AFO but these should disappear 25-30 minutes after taking the AFO off. If you find that the marks do not disappear and that you get sores or blister, please stop using the AFO and contact your orthotics department.

We recommend you check your skin every time for signs for pressure even when you have been wearing the AFO for some time.

Cleaning the AFO

Make sure you maintain your AFO in good working order.

- It can be cleaned with a damp cloth and dried but avoid using heat sources such as radiators as this will change the shape and properties of your AFO.
- If you have ankle joints, check them regularly and clean if necessary. If ankle joints are loose or worn then please contact the orthotic department.
- Velcro straps are prone to collect fluff and therefore we recommend it gets picked out to improve the grip.
- Do not immerse in water.

We recommend your AFO is serviced and checked every 6 months.
If you have any further queries please contact the orthotics department.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is my AFO so big and bulky?

AFOs are design to provide large amounts of force. The larger surface area the less pressure they will apply on the skin. They are also design to sustain large forces and therefore have to be made out of thicker stronger materials.

Contact Details

Orthotics Department:	
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Your Orthotist is:	

If you require this information in another language, please contact us on the above details.

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STPOR006 Issue 2