

Aljan Co.

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CUSTOM ANKLE FOOT ORTHOSIS

ABOUT YOUR ORTHOSIS

1. Your brace is designed to provide stability, while allowing motion in positive directions, and limiting motion in negative ones. This device was designed and fabricated specifically for you, with your goals, activity level and limitations in mind.
2. Wear socks, (preferably cotton or coolmax) which are taller than the AFO. This provides a barrier between your skin and the plastic to aid in prevention of skin breakdown.
3. The shoe is an integral part of the orthosis. It helps to secure your foot in the brace, and provide a stable base of support for safe ambulation. Shoes with a lace or velcro closure will hold your foot in position, and make donning (putting on) and doffing (taking off) easier. Slip-on shoes do not fit as securely, and if the shoe is not snug on your foot, the brace may not function properly, potentially causing you to trip. Removable insoles in your shoes are also helpful, as they create extra room for the brace. The insole can then be removed from the brace side, and the insoles doubled up on the unaffected side to absorb some of the extra room.
4. Shoes need to be large enough to accommodate the AFO, so take the orthosis with you when purchasing new footwear. It will be easier to ensure the AFO will fit and function properly in the new shoes if the shoes are fit to the brace. It will usually be necessary to buy shoes that are one to one and a half sizes larger than you normally wear to appropriately fit the AFO. Occasionally, extra depth shoes may be required to prevent pressure over the top of the foot, and a slight rocker sole may be helpful. Most of the time, one pair of shoes is adequate, but mismates are an option, either by purchasing two pair of shoes: one to fit the brace side, and one for the unbraced side, or by special ordering two sizes through a shoe store.
5. When you change shoes, be careful to maintain the same heel height. If the new shoes have a higher or lower heel than the height the AFO was fabricated to, it might adversely affect your balance, causing you to trip or fall.
6. It is important that you feel level when you are wearing the AFO. You should not feel as though your foot is sitting higher on the brace side. If this is the case, you need to let your practitioner know so that appropriate measures can be taken to correct this discrepancy. Often, the problem can be rectified by simply adding a piece of firm material to the inside of the opposite shoe. If the height difference cannot be corrected with material inside the shoe, it may be necessary to modify the outside of the shoe. Other shoe modifications may be recommended by your practitioner to improve and complement the function of your AFO, as well.
7. **Do not** place your AFO near a heat source (radiator, blow dryer, etc). Heat can warp the plastic, which will affect the fit of the brace and integrity of the materials.

8. To clean the AFO, wipe the plastic using a soft cloth with antibacterial soap, or medical alcohol as needed. Antibacterial wipes may be used as well. Ankle joints should be lubricated with a drop of teflon lubricant monthly, and routine maintenance appointments should be scheduled every 6 months, or more frequently if your practitioner recommends.

WEARING AND USE OF ORTHOSIS

1. Follow the wearing schedule provided by your practitioner. The schedule is designed to graduate the wearing time to allow you to build tolerance to the AFO, and ensure it's fitting appropriately. The time on the schedule includes both active and inactive time in the brace. Do not overuse the device, as skin breakdown may affect your ability to continue wearing the AFO until the area has healed.
2. There are two methods that can be used to don your AFO. One way is to put the brace into the shoe you are using, ensuring that the brace is against the back of the shoe, then slide your foot into the brace in the shoe. Otherwise, you can put the brace on your foot, and secure the straps, then put your shoe on over the brace. The design of your particular device, as well as any physical limitations you have dictate which method will work best for you. Your practitioner will assist you in determining the most effective way for you or an assistant to don your brace.
3. Each time you wear your brace during the break in period, you should remove your sock and check your skin. This is especially important if you have neuropathy, or other loss of sensation. If you are unable to see the bottom of your foot, have a helper check the skin for you. If red marks are present, they should dissipate within 30 minutes after removing the AFO.
4. Make sure that you are safe when you begin to ambulate with the brace. You may need to use a walker or cane for balance because the brace has changed the position of your ankle and foot, which also changes your gait pattern.
5. Do not be discouraged if it appears to take longer than expected to build tolerance to the AFO. Each individual has specific needs, and conditions that may affect the fit of and tolerance to the orthosis. The AFO should not hurt, nor cause skin breakdown, blisters, or rashes. Since it is fabricated from rigid materials, adjustments may be necessary to ensure optimal fit of the device. Call for an appointment to have the AFO adjusted if there are any questions or problems.

An appointment is required to make changes or adjustments to your device. Staff is available for emergency needs on weekends and holidays from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Call the number below for instructions on how to contact the practitioner on call.

**Please call if you have any problems with or questions about your device. Report any changes in your health or physical condition that may affect the fit or function of your device, such as changes in weight or volume, muscle strength, or recent surgeries.
(608) 257-4256**