



ANIMAL ORTHO CARE

CUSTOM KNEE & HOCK BRACE

FIT AND CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Wearing Instructions

We suggest a gradual break in schedule so that your pet can slowly acclimate to the orthosis. The first day the dog should wear it for no more than 30 minutes. Look for signs of irritation when you remove. If no signs of irritation, then increase another 30 minutes for day 2, making it 1 hour. Increase 30 minutes for each day after that, building up to no more than 14 hours a day. The purpose of the break in period is to allow your dog to adjust to the brace and it builds up their skin tolerance. It also provides you with fitting practice. Too much of the brace on too soon will cause irritation, so please make sure you follow the break in period.

We always suggest that you remove the device at night unless your Veterinarian suggests otherwise. The brace should always be on for outside activity. The brace does not need to be on while the dog is sleeping/napping. The dog should not wear the brace while they are crated either. The amount of time you have the brace on your dog will be dependent on the injury, severity, activity level of dog and recommendations from your veterinarian.

Activity Level/ Restrictions

For the first 2 weeks, we recommend a few short walks up to 10-15 minutes a day. Gradually increase this activity as its tolerated. Limit stairs. If stairs are used, try to support their hind area to assist with this activity. No zoomies or ball playing for the first 2 months. This brace can be worn in the water. After any swimming activity, please remove the brace and dry completely with a towel. Please remove the pads from the Velcro straps and let those air dry. The brace can be reapplied after everything is dry.

Cleaning the brace

Please use light soapy water or antibacterial wipes to clean the plastic shell and non-porous liner of the brace. Hand-wash the pads as needed and then let them air dry. Remove any hair or dirt from the Velcro with a wire brush. Gently brush in one direction on the hook portion of the Velcro only.

Brace Fitting

The animal can be standing or laying down during the fitting process. Position the animal's leg in the brace by aligning the knee center with the joints on the side of the brace. The easiest way to identify the knee center is feeling for a couple protrusion points along your dog's knee. If you bend your dog's knee, you will feel these two protrusion points on the front of the knee – a bump on the top of knee and one on the lower part of knee. Find these two protrusion points. If you go in between these two points, this will be the knee center. The center of the rubber hinges must be aligned with this knee center. You will also need to double check once this is aligned at the knee center that there are about two fingers worth from the top of brace to the groin (where the upper thigh meets the abdomen). Ensure the hock joint aligns with the hock. If the brace includes a paw, make sure it is sitting flat in the paw section of the device. The limb should rest all the way back into the brace.

Loosen the tibia strap in front (if you have one). Tighten the lowest strap first. The bottom strap should be very secure but not too tight as to cut off circulation. Use one hand to keep your pet's limb in the brace and use the other hand to tighten the strap. Tighten the middle strap or straps. You will want these to be very snug as well. Tighten the top strap. If you have a tibia strap in front of the brace, secure that last. Please note that you will see some gapping between the brace and your dog's knee near the front strap. This is normal. The strap is not very tight and will only touch below your dog's knee when the leg is in full flexion. Smaller dogs may not have the tibia strap. Instead, smaller dogs will have a higher shell piece in front to encapsulate the tibia.

Check the fit of the brace. No part of the device should rub on the bones. The hock should rest all the way back into the brace. If the brace includes a paw, it should not extend over the paw section. If there is excessive movement of the limb in the brace while the animal walks, try to secure the straps more. The brace should fit securely to the leg. Please reach out to care@aocpet.com if you are experiencing any fitting issues. If you email, please send a picture with the brace on from the front, side and rear of the leg at eye level.

Once the brace is securely on, encourage your animal to take a few steps in the device. It is not uncommon for them to display a weird or uncommon gait at first and they may not bear full weight on the brace initially. This is why we encourage a slow break in period. Every animal acclimates to devices in their own time. This could take up to 2 weeks. The dog may start to knuckle, which is walking on top of the paws. Note this is a common reaction and should subside after about a week.

Whenever you remove the brace, inspect your animal's limb for any skin irritations or swelling. Redness could occur on the limb but it should dissipate within 10-15 minutes. Please discontinue the use of the brace if there is any noticeable swelling or open wounds that occur from wear. Please notify care@aocpet.com right away.

Always inspect your brace for any signs of wear. Straps and padding may need to be replaced over time. Keep the foam liner as clean as possible by using an antibacterial wipe or mild warm soapy water and then dry. If the foam compresses, use a hair dryer and gradually heat up the liner surface to decompress it. This should only take about 10 seconds or so.

Modifications/Adjustments

Adjustments and modifications may be necessary once you receive your brace. If modifications are needed please ensure to reach out to aocpet.com first and provide the necessary photos as mentioned above. If fabrication confirms modifications are needed you will need to send the brace into them. Modifications are a quick turnaround.

Replacement Parts/Refurb Program

If you ever need new straps or pads for your brace you can order them right on our website at aocpet.com. We do offer a refurb program for braces as well. This is where we replace components of the brace for you. This refurb program information is also listed on our website for you to learn more about.