

METAL AFO GUIDE

You have received a metal AFO (Ankle Foot Orthosis) from Orthotic & Prosthetic Specialties, Inc. Your orthosis is a specialized device, and its use may require specialized instructions. These may come from your Orthotist, Therapist, or Nurse as directed by your Physician. Your Physician determines the medical need and wearing schedule for your orthosis, which in turn determine your individualized instructions. Following are general guidelines for wearing and caring for your AFO. Your doctor may alter or supersede any of them, and you should follow his/her directions carefully.

Your AFO is ineffective and dangerous without a shoe; therefore it must be worn with a shoe at all times. All straps should be fastened snugly.

Your orthosis may have a locking mechanism which will require practice or assistance to operate easily. Your therapist or Orthotist can help you with learning this task.

A sock or stocking worn under the orthosis will act as padding, make it easier to put on (don), take off (doff), and keep you drier from perspiration. Smooth out all wrinkles, keep the socks clean, and change them frequently. Using pure talcum powder or corn starch under the sock will help keep it dry.

The orthosis is attached to a shoe in one of two ways: 1) A solid stirrup plate which is attached directly to the bottom of the shoe and then to the orthosis. This does not allow you to change the orthosis from shoe to shoe yourself. 2) Split stirrups and a caliper plate, which allows you to change the orthosis from shoe to shoe as long as the new shoe also has a caliper plate installed. Your Orthotist can demonstrate how to change your orthosis from shoe to shoe. Be sure to loosen any straps or laces on the shoe before donning the shoe and orthosis.

Your orthosis may fit correctly and still feel uncomfortable at first. You may also experience some discomfort in other parts of your body in reaction to the new (corrected) alignment the orthosis is providing. If these conditions are severe or persist, contact your Orthotist.

Redness of the skin may develop under pressure areas of a new orthosis. Redness should lessen greatly or disappear in 10 to 30 minutes after the orthosis is removed, and as your tolerance increases, these areas may cease to occur at all. If the redness does not disappear or if your skin becomes sore or irritated, do not wear the orthosis (unless you have been instructed otherwise) and contact your Orthotist. Examine your skin frequently, at least two times a day.

Significant swelling of your leg or large changes in body weight may cause improper fit of your orthosis, making an adjustment necessary.

Your orthosis may accumulate and absorb dirt and perspiration, and can be wiped out with a damp cloth, mild soap, or rubbing alcohol. Do not allow moisture to remain in any joints of your orthosis. Make sure no soap residue remains, and allow the orthosis to dry at room temperature or in front of a fan. Do not dry your orthosis with a hair dryer or place it on or near a heater. Use silicone, graphite, teflon, or a very light household oil to lubricate joints and promptly wipe away any excess.

Your orthosis may become brittle and more vulnerable to cracking when exposed to very cold temperatures. If possible, try to limit the stress placed upon your orthosis when cold.

Please call Orthotic & Prosthetic Specialties, Inc. at 531-2773 if you notice signs of excessive wear anywhere on your orthosis, if any joints in your orthosis do not move freely, and if there is a change in the amount of motion allowed, if any fasteners are not secure, or if you are having other difficulties or have questions about your orthosis. Do not attempt to adjust or repair your orthosis yourself. We will make every attempt to resolve any problem or answer any question as soon as possible.