

Care of



MeritCare
HealthCare Accessories

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Lower Extremity Orthotics

(Ankle Foot Orthosis, Knee-Ankle-Foot Orthosis)

While being fitted with your ankle-foot orthosis (AFO) or knee-ankle-foot orthosis (KAFO), your orthotist will instruct you on how to wear and use your orthosis effectively. Some points to remember are:

Stockings:

- Always wear clean, dry stockings that are wrinkle free.
- The stocking length should be at least as high as the orthosis. This will improve comfort and reduce perspiration between the brace and skin.
- A medium weight cotton blend sock is recommended.
- Specific AFO/KAFO stockings are available. Please ask your orthotist if you are interested.

Shoes:

- Always wear shoes in good condition that fully incorporates the orthosis. Shoes with worn heels, uppers or soles will negatively affect how the orthosis functions.
- Your wardrobe of shoes should have similar heel heights. Avoid loafers, sandals, slippers or shoes with high heels when wearing an orthosis. Lace or Velcro closure athletic shoes are recommended.
- Many popular athletic or walking shoes have removable factory inserts that may be removed before using the orthotic in the shoe. Removing this insert will add *extra* depth to the shoe.
- Some *people* express difficulty in finding a proper size shoe to wear with the orthosis. It may be necessary to wear a larger and/or wider shoe with the orthosis. Normally one full size larger is sufficient. The toe area should be deep and wide. It should not press or rub against the toes when worn with the orthosis. Parents looking for shoes for their child may consult the web pages listed at the end of this sheet.

Donning:

Note: If you are diabetic or have poor sensation in your feet ; please refer to the attached instructions for Users with Diabetes/Neuropathy/Peripheral Vascular Disease (PVD)/Insensate Skin

Donning is the act of “putting on”. These are two recommended methods:

1. Donn the orthosis first, tighten all straps making sure your heel is “seated” fully into the orthosis. Shoes can now be donned. You may find it helpful to loosen the shoe opening as much as possible and to use a shoehorn.
2. If you do not have a lower (ankle) strap built into the orthosis, you may slip the orthosis into the shoe first. Using your orthosis as a shoehorn, slide the foot fully into the orthosis and shoe. Tighten all straps as necessary. The shoe closure needs to be tight enough to ensure the foot does not move around inside the orthosis.

Wearing Procedure:

1. On the first day, remove the shoe and the orthosis after the first hour. Carefully examine your *leg/foot* for red or sore areas. The red areas should disappear within approximately 20 minutes of rest.
2. If no red areas persist, increase the wearing time 1-2 hours per day as tolerated.
3. Always inspect your feet daily for signs of numbness, tingling, color changes, excessive pressure, excessive itching, swelling, or pain. Notify your orthotist or physician of any concerns.
4. If you are diabetic or have poor circulation in your feet please review the additional attached sheet.
5. Never attempt to use your orthosis without a shoe as you may easily slip, fall or break the orthosis.
6. Parents of children wearing an orthosis should monitor the child's leg/ foot for red sore or discomfort, which may occur as the child grows.

Maintenance:

1. Inspect the orthosis daily for cracking, loose or worn parts. **Do not attempt to modify or adjust the orthosis on your own.** Contact HealthCare Accessories for an appointment with your orthotist.
2. You may wipe down the orthosis with a damp cloth to clean it. Use a mild soap and warm water only. The orthosis should be completely dry before using it.
3. Change in weight, activity, overall health and/or skeletal structure may cause your orthosis to fit unsatisfactorily. Visit with your physician or orthotist on a regular basis to see if any changes are necessary.
4. Do not place the orthosis in direct sunlight or near a heat source. This may lead to your orthosis losing its shape *and function*.
5. Follow-up appointments are necessary to help maintain proper function. The fit and function of the orthosis should be checked annually. Please follow your orthotists recommendations for additional recheck appointments and contact HealthCare Accessories to schedule an appointment.

After Hours Care:

If you need to contact HealthCare Accessories LLC after hours, call the office that you are closest to. You will be forwarded on to an operator who will assist you. *Please state that this is in reference to an orthotic concern.* Depending on the situation, you may be charged for this service.

Web Resources for Specialized Children's Shoes:

Note: MeritCare HealthCare Accessories does not promote or have a relationship with the following web sites. This information is being provided solely as an informational service.

Hatchbacks Footwear. Customer Service 800-726-5432
www.hatchbacksfootwear.com

KeepingPace, Children's Orthopedic Footwear. Customer Service 888-526-0020.
www.keepingpace.com

New Balance Athletic Shoe, Inc. Customer Service 800-253-7463
http://www.newbalance.com/techcenter/footwear/footwear_fit.html