

A GUIDE FOR ADULT ANKLE FOOT ORTHOSES (AFO)



PEACOCKS EST. 1903
ORTHOTICS

About Peacocks

Founded in 1903, Peacocks Medical Group have a wealth of experience both clinically and technically, for the manufacture and supply of orthotics including footwear, insoles, AFOs and more.

We are committed to customer care, quality and innovation and our experienced orthotists have a wide range of specialist skills covering all aspects of orthotics. Whilst our highly-skilled technicians use their experience and knowledge to manufacture orthotic devices which can improve our patient's lives.

Our quality system meets the requirements of BS EN ISO 9001:2015. All our products meet the requirements of The Medical Devices Regulations and are CE marked where appropriate.

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You have been prescribed an ankle foot orthosis (AFO). This leaflet is designed to help you obtain the very best benefits for its use.

The AFO is to assist with your walking and standing. Depending on your condition it may be provided on one or both legs. AFOs are part of the treatment to improve your standing and walking and can have an effect on the movements of your ankle and knee. It will change the way you move and you will need to take time to adjust to the new feeling.

In the early days you may need help in putting it on correctly but with practice and time you should learn to accomplish this. On occasions AFOs are prescribed to make sitting more comfortable. Your aim is to make the AFO part of your daily routine and within a three week period it is hoped that you are able to wear it for the majority of the day, taking it off as often as you like for short rest periods when sitting, unless instructed otherwise.

If you are not clear about any aspect of the AFO and it's fitting then please speak to the Orthotist who supplied it.

Always wear a good quality, plain unpatterned sock underneath the AFO. Ideally this should cover all of the skin underneath but some people prefer a shorter sock. Use whatever you find suits you. Always make certain that the sock is crease free and in hot weather ensure that a spare pair is always at hand to change.

You will need shoes which are slightly larger to accommodate the AFO. Trainers are particularly suited and they do not need to be an expensive type. Ideally the footwear should open by either lace or velcro as far down the foot and towards the toes as possible. Choose a variety where the insole can be removed to give extra room. Putting the shoes on over the AFO is a skill which takes a bit of practice. Take time to learn.

Before putting the AFO on, give a gentle stretch at the ankle. Then ensure that the knee is bent to 90° and the heel is in place right to the back of the AFO and the ankle strap securely applied to ensure that the heel stays there. If the ankle strap is left slack, the heel may rise up disturbing the treatment and causing discomfort. It is essential that the heel is in the correct place. Please note, some AFOs do not have ankle straps.

When you are supplied with your first AFO slowly introduce it into your daily routine. Aim to be wearing it the majority of the day within three weeks; adding more time each day from the start. Be really gentle when putting the AFO on. Ideally the AFO should eventually be worn as you would wear socks; put on in the morning and removed at night with short periods of not wearing the AFO during the day.

The AFO is made from polypropylene which is a hard plastic. The skin needs to get used to wearing the AFO and may thicken in some areas; this is a natural process. Skin damage or blistering should NOT occur and should this appear; please contact the department that

supplied your AFO to arrange an appointment and receive advice. Redness which disappears within 30 minutes is the natural response to pressure and is normally not a concern.

During hot weather the skin can become damp and increase the chance of blistering. It is advisable that you remove the AFO, dry the skin and consider using talcum powder. A change of socks is often helpful.

Sometimes AFOs are prescribed for night use. You will be informed if this is the case but otherwise remove them for bathing and bed. It is not advisable to wear an AFO without footwear as they can be slippery.

Care of your AFO

The AFO may be cleaned by wiping with a warm soapy cloth.

The pads and straps may need replacing as they become worn or soiled. Return them to the department where they were supplied for repair or refurbishment.

If your leg either swells or gets thinner the AFO may need to be altered or re-cast. Please contact your Orthotic Department for assessment.

Your orthotist will make every effort to support you with the use of the AFO. If you are in doubt about any aspect please discuss it with him/her.

Do not attempt to adjust the AFO yourself.