

# ADVICE AND CARE OF YOUR HAND CRAFTED ORTHOSIS



**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.

**We've included here a record of useful information.**

**Keep this leaflet handy – you don't know when you may need it.**

You have been prescribed with

.....

Your supply centre

.....

Your Appliance Officer

.....

Your Orthotist

.....

Benfield Business Park . Benfield Road .  
Newcastle upon Tyne . NE6 4NQ  
Tel: 0191 276 9600 . Fax: 0191 276 9696  
Web: [www.peacocks.net](http://www.peacocks.net)

## General Advice

Please examine your orthosis every week, check to make sure that:

- Straps and fastenings are secure
- Velcro and padding are not worn
- Rivets and screws are secure
- There are no loose movements in the joints or spurs

Please never try to make any repairs to your orthosis. Your appliance officer at your clinic will be able to help you with:

- Your repair procedure
- The procedure for seeking advice should you have any difficulty or discomfort with your orthosis

## Shoes and Insoles

When to wear? New shoes or insoles may feel a little uncomfortable at first, to minimise any discomfort they should be introduced gradually around the house or workplace for the first two weeks. Initially on day one, wear your shoes or insoles preferably in the mornings when our feet are not so swollen for an hour, then take off for an hour building up to wearing for most of the day on day five. Check for blisters or skin damage and contact the orthotic clinic should this occur. If diabetic or you have impaired sensation then reduce the time on and extend the break in period. If you need help or advice please ask your centre.

## Shoe Adaptations

We can adapt your shoes internally or externally to give you the best fit and support whilst maintaining the aesthetics of your shoe.

## School Use

Many schools do not allow their children to wear outdoor shoes when indoors. In most cases orthotic footwear should be worn all day and therefore it is advisable to speak to the teacher or Head Teacher to explain your child's individual circumstances. If necessary your supply centre physiotherapist may be able to correspond with the school.

Growing feet will need regular measuring to ensure the correct size footwear is being worn. Your physiotherapist and orthotist are able to advise when shoes need to be changed.

**Remember socks can shrink with regular washing. Socks can cause as many foot problems as wearing a pair of shoes that are too small, so always check your child's socks and renew them regularly.**

## Cleaning and Care

Leather footwear should be polished regularly with a shoe polish or cream available from your supermarkets.

**It's a good idea to protect your leather shoes from the elements with a good quality rainguard, which can be purchased from most shoe shops. Wet shoes should be allowed to dry thoroughly before wearing. Dry in a well ventilated area at room temperature. Do not place damp shoes on a radiator, near a fire, in a tumble dryer or in an airing cupboard, as this shrinks the sole units. Mud and heavy soiling should be removed with a damp cloth before the shoes are left to dry.**

Nubuck and suede shoes should be cleaned using brushes and specialist cleaners – available from most shoe shops. Do not wash your footwear in a washing machine. Leather insoles and plastic shoe inserts should be wiped clean with a damp cloth or disinfected wet wipes.

**Lightly dust insoles with non-perfumed baby talcum powder to freshen.**

## Ankle Foot Orthosis (AFO)

An Ankle Foot Orthosis or AFO is a device, made out of plastic, which is designed to aid balance and walking. AFOs can be ready made or custom made, and are worn by adults or children.

### When to wear?

An AFO, particularly if this is the first time you have worn one, can be a little uncomfortable at first. To minimise discomfort it should be introduced gradually over approximately two weeks, until it can be worn comfortably all day.

On the first day the AFO should be worn for a maximum of thirty minutes. The condition of the skin around the AFO should be checked regularly. The AFO and socks should be removed to visually check the condition of the skin and if any blisters or sores are noted then the AFO should be reviewed by the orthotist incase any modifications are required.

Most AFOs are designed for all day use, but there are some designs which should only be worn at night, your orthotist will advise you when your particular device should be used. Application of the AFO is not always possible by the wearer. In these cases the parents or carers should be taught how to secure the AFO.

**When the AFO is being worn some users may find it more comfortable to wear larger size footwear.**

## Knee Ankle Foot Orthosis (KAFO)

The Knee Ankle Foot Orthosis or KAFO is designed to stabilise one leg. Worn by children and adults, the KAFO like the AFO is prescribed by a doctor and dispensed by an orthotist. KAFOs require regular checks and maintenance and it is our recommendation that long term users should have a safety check carried out every six months to ensure the device is in optimum working order.

**Important – to ensure maximum safety when weight bearing through the KAFO, both knee joints should be engaged all the time.**

### Cleaning and caring for your AFO or KAFO?

The AFO is made of plastic so you may notice that under the device your skin perspires more than usual. It is advisable that socks are changed regularly and skin cleaned frequently to avoid excess perspiration. The plastic of the AFO can be wiped clean with a damp cloth; the straps can be washed with warm soapy water and towel dried. The leather parts of the KAFO should be cleaned regularly using saddle soap; plastic parts should be wiped clean with a damp cloth and the metal joints cleaned carefully using an old toothbrush. Knee joints and spurs should be lightly coated with oil or vaseline.

## Fabric Supports

Fabric Supports come in different shapes and sizes and have a variety of uses from spinal and abdominal support to arm and leg gaiters. They all offer gentle support and some pain relief and should be worn as directed by your practitioner. It is rare for skin irritation to occur as a result of wearing a fabric support but if any redness, soreness or irritation does occur, contact your orthotist.

### Cleaning and Caring for your Fabric Support

Wearing a fabric support in hot weather may cause you to perspire more than normal. To allow for regular cleaning the detachable pads can be laundered separately from the support. It is safe to wash fabric supports in a washing machine. Cleaning and ironing advice is attached to every garment on a water-resistant label. It is advisable to regularly examine your fabric support for wear and tear. Check straps and fastenings are secure, pay careful attention to velcro padding and bindings.

**When cleaning your fabric support remove all detachable metal supports and place the garment inside a pillowcase to protect your washing machine.**