

Useful Contacts

- British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists (BAPO)
www.bapo.com
Telephone 0845 166 8490
- SCOPE
For disabled people achieving equality
www.scope.org.uk
Tel: 08088003333
- HemiHelp
For children and young people with hemiplegia.
www.hemihelp.org.uk
Tel: 08451232372
- International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO)
www.ispoint.org

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Oxford University Hospitals **NHS**
NHS Trust

Department of Orthotics



Your Orthotist is.....

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Guidelines for the use of children's Ankle Foot Orthosis (AFO)

Putting on your AFO

Ankle Foot Orthoses are designed to hold your foot and ankle in a straightened position. This might be to improve your walking, to give you a stable base for standing, or to prevent the muscles around your foot and ankle from tightening while you are growing.

It is important that you put your AFO on properly to make it comfortable and prevent it rubbing.

- Bend knee to a right angle.
- Hold foot straight and then lift foot up so that your toes are pointing up and your heel down.
- Lower the heel into the back of the AFO and make sure it reaches the bottom.
- Secure ankle strap so that the heel is held into the back of the AFO.
- Securely fasten the calf strap.

There may be additional straps, if so your Orthotist will show you how to fasten them.

Finding Footwear

The footwear that is worn with your AFO is very important. There are a few things that you should consider when deciding on footwear.

- If you are buying footwear always take the AFO with you.
- Lace ups and Velcro are preferable as they give the most adjustment. The lower they open down the tongue of the shoe the better.
- Some Velcro and buckle shoes are suitable but offer less adjustment.
- A removable inlay is very useful. By removing this you can create more space for your AFO.
- High heels are not desirable, 1-1.5cm maximum. As the splint is set at a specific angle too high a heel can tip the knee forward too much.

If you have any difficulties finding footwear then please speak with your Orthotist.

Using and Cleaning

The AFO is to be worn as much as possible while walking as it will help keep you stable and enable you to walk more efficiently.

You should begin by using your AFO for short periods perhaps 1 hour, removing it to check for signs of pressure or rubbing (particularly around the foot and ankles). There might be some redness or marking, this should disappear within 20 minutes or so. Build up the use gradually and continue to check, if you think a blister might develop then return to see your Orthotist to have your AFO adjusted.

The AFO should be cleaned with a damp cloth and towel dried, heat will distort the shape. Do not soak it or use any detergents. Any fluff or hair can be picked out of the Velcro straps.

As you grow you might find that it starts to rub, if this happens phone and arrange a follow up appointment with your Orthotist who will either adjust it or make a new one.