



Western Trust Orthotics Department - Ankle Foot Orthosis

What is an Ankle Foot Orthosis (AFO)?

The Ankle Foot Orthosis (sometimes referred to as a splint or AFO) is worn on the lower leg and foot and is designed to support the ankle and control the movement of your foot and ankle to allow a more normal walking pattern.

General Advice

- Follow your “wearing in schedule” (explained later in this leaflet).
- Wear as instructed by your orthotist.
- Check your AFO to make sure there are no grit/stones/pins/loose objects inside each time you put it on.
- Don't attempt to repair or modify your AFO, please return to Orthotic clinic if your AFO is hurting or has broken.
- Clean the AFO with a damp cloth and allow to air dry.
- Do not subject orthoses to extremes of hot/cold.
- Wear long cotton socks beneath your AFO to minimise likelihood of rubbing.

Applying your Ankle Foot Orthosis (AFO)

Whilst sitting comfortable, bend the hips and knees. Bend the foot up at the ankle as much as possible and hold this position by controlling the forefoot, bringing the AFO up from behind and seating the heel fully into the back before firmly fastening the ankle strap. You can look along length of the foot to check that there are no gaps beneath the heel. It is important that the heel strap is fastened securely, as it is this that controls the foot's position within the AFO. If it is loose, then the heel will be able to rise up, defeating the object of stretching the muscles, but also increasing the chances of the splint rubbing and being uncomfortable. After this the calf strap can be done up.



Please scan the QR code or follow the URL to view a video of AFO application
<http://bit.ly/2j0iAeV>



“Wearing in Schedule”

Your new orthosis may take time to get used to. It is important to follow the “wearing in schedule” below to allow the wearer to become accustomed to the sensation of the new orthosis. Each orthosis will feel different to the wearer. It can be normal for the wearer to feel one insole more comfortable than the other to wear at first.

DAY	Length of time Worn (mins/hours)
1	30 minutes – 1 hour
2 – 3	1-2 hours
4- 7	2-6 hours
8- 10	6-8 hours
10 +	Gradually increase until all day

- Do not use the orthoses for sport or exercise until you have completed the “wearing in schedule”.
- Check your skin for pressure and rubbing. Please contact the Orthotics Department to make a review appointment if you experience skin redness that doesn’t fade after 30-45 minutes or the occurrence of sores/blisters and/or discomfort.
- Discontinue use of the orthoses should this happen.
- Take particular caution if your sensation is any way altered due to Diabetes or Neuropathy.

What shoes are suitable to be worn with the AFO?

The splint should be worn with low broad heeled shoes. Beware: Too high a heel may cause instability at your knee and hips. The ideal is where a shoe has a pitch (difference of height between the heel and sole depths when measured from the side) of 10-12mm. To accommodate the AFO they should have a broad and deep enough toe box; a removable inlay that can be removed to allow for room for the orthosis; a firm heel counter with sufficient depth and; secure fastening, either lace, velcro or buckle. Trainer type shoes provide good support and are ideal.

Slip on and court shoes **CANNOT** be worn with an AFO as they do not provide enough support or security.

What happens next?

Your Orthotist may request that you return for a review appointment to review the provision of new AFO after 6 to 8 weeks. Replacements are only issued when AFOs are worn out, your orthotist will advise you of the expected lifespan of your AFO. Please contact the department if you require replacements on the numbers below.

If you have any further queries, please contact:

	Altnagelvin Hospital	Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Complex	South West Acute Hospital
Appointments Orthotics Partial Bookings	(028) 71 296192	(028) 82 833666	(028) 82 833666
Collections and additional information Appliance Office	(028) 71 611147	(028) 82 833193	(028) 66 382057