



# **Orthotic & Prosthetic**

SPECIALTIES INC.

## **ANKLE FOOT ORTHOSIS (AFO)** USE AND CARE INSTRUCTIONS

An Ankle Foot Orthosis (AFO) is a custom molded plastic brace designed to stabilize weak muscles, immobilize painful joints, or correct the position of the foot and ankle.

### HOW TO USE YOUR ANKLE FOOT ORTHOSIS

- Wear with a lace-up shoe that has enough room for both your foot and the AFO to fit comfortably. Pay attention to the heel height: this will affect both the alignment and the way you walk. The heel height should be the same on all of your shoes.
- Wear a cotton sock between your skin and the AFO. The sock will absorb perspiration and help protect your skin. A long sock that folds back over the top of the AFO is best.
- Putting on your AFO: position the AFO on your leg and slip your foot and AFO together into your shoe OR place the AFO into your shoe first, then slide your foot into the AFO and shoe, using the AFO like a shoehorn.
- When you first try to walk with your AFO, you may feel awkward. Practice in your home or with a physical therapist before you walk outside.
- Begin wearing the AFO for approximately one hour at a time, then take it off and rest your leg. Alternate wearing the AFO and resting your leg for the first few days. Become used to wearing the AFO gradually. Slowly increase your wearing time over the next several days.
- It is VERY important to check your foot and ankle area for any red pressure areas. Any reddened area that does not fade after 20 minutes should be watched carefully. This is especially important for patients who are diabetic or have poor sensation in their feet. Call your orthotist if you have any concerns.
- Do not become discouraged if you feel an adjustment is needed. This is not unusual. A minor adjustment might be needed to ensure a good fit. Call your orthotist to discuss this.

### HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR ANKLE FOOT ORTHOSIS

- Clean the thermoplastic sections at least once a week using mild soap, and rinse well.
- Metal joints will require periodic lubrication. Ask your orthotist what type of lubricant to use.

### IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT YOUR ANKLE FOOT ORTHOSIS

An AFO is a very specialized device. It is VERY important to keep all follow-up appointments made by your orthotist. Schedule an appointment at our office if any unexpected problems occur.