

Ankle Foot Orthosis

This leaflet explains more about AFO's. If you have any further questions, please speak to the Orthotist caring for you.

What are AFO's?

An Ankle Foot Orthosis (AFO) is a device worn on the lower leg to support the foot and ankle. It usually ends just below the knee. AFOs can be made to fit you specifically (custom-made) or come in standard sizes (off the shelf). They are often used if you have:

- Weak muscles
- Unstable joints
- Tight or stiff muscles

What is the purpose of an AFO?

An AFO helps to:

- Prevent or correct foot and leg problems
- Make walking easier
- Help you move more independently
- Support healing after Orthopaedic intervention
- Reduce pain
- Improve balance and safety



How to put your AFO on correctly:

1. Make sure your skin is clean and dry.
2. Always wear a sock under the AFO to protect your skin.
 - Use smooth socks with no wrinkles.
3. When putting on the AFO:
 - Bend your knee.
 - Push your heel firmly down into the heel part of the AFO.
4. Fasten the ankle strap tightly (if it has one), then secure the calf strap.
5. Always wear shoes with the AFO (unless it's only for resting).
 - Trainers are a good choice because they are roomy and supportive to accommodate the AFO.

Wearing your AFO:

Start by wearing your AFO for a short time and increase by about an hour each day.

Within 2 weeks, you should be wearing it as advised.

- Never wear your AFO for more than 24 hours straight.
- Your orthotist will tell you how long to wear it each day.

Skin care:

- Check your skin daily after wearing the AFO.
- Some redness is normal but should go away within 30 minutes.
- If you have pain, long-lasting redness, or blisters, stop wearing and contact the orthotics department for help.

Cleaning and taking care of your AFO:

- Wipe it down with a damp cloth and mild soap. Let it air dry completely.
- Don't use heat (like a hair dryer) to dry it.
- Try to keep the straps dry.
- Check for worn or broken straps—these can usually be replaced quickly.
- Never cut, file, or heat your AFO.
- If it feels too small or tight, contact the orthotics department for a review. Bring your AFO to that appointment.

Contact us:

If you have any questions or concerns about orthotics, please contact admin on 020 8487 6056/6033 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4pm). Out of hours, please email: orthotics.qmh@stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111



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