

Information for patients

# Carbon Fibre Ankle Foot Orthosis



RJAH  
**Orthotics**

## Ankle Foot Orthoses (AFOs)

AFOs are prescribed for many reasons, including:

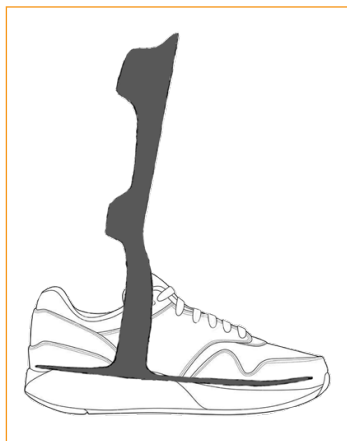
- To realign and control the ankle and foot joints.
- To offer support to weakened or weakening joints
- To limit or stop abnormal motion
- To offer protection
- To help control abnormal muscle tone

Carbon fibre is a material often used for orthotic devices it is strong whilst also being lightweight and is less bulky compared to plastic options. It can have different stiffnesses depending on the needs of the patient, and we can order many different types of design to suit a patient's needs. Your AFO will have a footplate inserted into your shoe, a stem, which can be on the inside, outside, or up the back of your calf, and either a calf band or a shin plate, depending on what your needs are. There will also be one or two straps to secure the calf section to your leg.

## Fitting and Footwear

**Your AFO should always be used in a shoe, and not all shoes will be suitable to wear. Below are some tips on how to find the most suitable shoes to use:**

- A lace or Velcro fastening is preferred for a secure fit.
- A shoe with a lower opening, where the base of the tongue is closer to the toes, will make putting the shoe on easier with use of the AFO.
- An insole should be put on top of the footplate to offer cushioning. Most footwear has a removable insole or one that is stuck down with double sided tape or a dot of glue. This can be removed to put on top instead of taking up further space within your shoe with an additional insole. If your shoe's insoles cannot be removed, a simple insole can be purchased from the orthotics department, with alternatives being available online, or from your local shoe shop or pharmacy.



Take your AFO with you when you are buying new shoes. If your AFO will not fit into your shoes you may need to go for half or a whole size bigger. Footwear should not have a heel more than two and a half centimetres (one inch).

It is easiest to put on your AFO when it is already within your shoe. Make sure your heel is right to the back of the shoe and firmly down. As most carbon fibre AFOs do not have a strap to secure your heel in place, it is reliant on your footwear being fastened snugly to keep your foot from moving. The calf strap or straps should be fastened securely, but not so tight that they are uncomfortable.

## **Wearing your AFO**

You need to give yourself time to get used to your AFO. Build up the amount of time you wear it each day until it is comfortable, which can take a week or two. Once it has been broken in you should aim to wear it as much as possible to ensure control and support.

## **Caution!**

It is normal for there to be some red marking of the skin when you take off your AFO, which is often where the straps have been fastened. This should disappear within half an hour or so. It is also normal to build up a little hard skin, especially on the foot. So long as this is not excessive it is nothing to worry about. It is especially important to check your skin regularly if you have altered sensation.

**If there are persistent red marks or blistering, discontinue wearing your AFO until you have contacted the department for advice.**

## Care

### **Please keep your AFO well maintained:**

- Pads can be washed as per the AFO instruction manual, and the AFO itself should be wiped down regularly
- Keep it away from direct heat and radiators
- If the hook and loop fastenings, straps or lining of your orthosis become worn, we can order replacements to collect.
- Please do not try to adapt the orthosis yourself
- Do not excessively flex the splint as this can cause breakage
- Your AFO has been prescribed for you and should not be given to anyone else as this could cause them problems

### **It is vital to check over your AFO regularly to look out for signs of wear. These signs include:**

- Splitting, known as delamination, of the layers
- Cracks
- Whitening of the surface
- Reduced spring of the device, or the feeling of reduced support when walking

Areas of particular risk to breakdown are the base of the stem, where it connects to the footplate, and the toes. If you should come across any of the above signs of wear, stop wearing the AFO, contact the department and we will arrange a review or order a replacement.

## Contact

**The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital**

**Tel: 01691 404442**

Below are the opening times for the department for dropping off/collecting footwear and appliances.

### RECEPTION OPENING TIMES

Monday – Thursday, 8.15am – 5pm

Friday, 8.15am – 4.45pm

### GENERAL ENQUIRIES

Monday – Thursday, 8.45am – 5pm

Friday, 8.45am – 4pm

**The Royal Shrewsbury Hospital**

**Tel: 01743 261000 Ext: 3701**

Monday – Thursday, 9am – 4pm

Friday, 8.30am – 3pm

**The Princess Royal Hospital**

**Tel: 01952 641222 Ext: 4224**

Monday – Thursday, 9am – 4pm

Friday, 9am – 12.30pm

**ALL SITES ARE CLOSED FOR LUNCH 12.30PM – 1.15PM**

## Notes:



## If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print. Arrangements can also be made on request for it to be explained in your preferred language. Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: [rjah.pals.office@nhs.net](mailto:rjah.pals.office@nhs.net)

## Feedback

Tell us what you think of our patient information leaflet.  
Please send your comments to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: [rjah.pals.office@nhs.net](mailto:rjah.pals.office@nhs.net)

Please note that any device supplied by the Orthotics Department is property of the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and should be returned to the department upon the end of its use unless advised otherwise. Do not dispose of any devices until they have been inspected by a member of the Orthotics team, or unless you have been informed to do so by a member of the team. In the event of loss or damage beyond expected wear, you may be asked to pay a replacement fee.

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