

## Who wears them and why?

AFO's are worn by the young and old alike



There are a variety of clinical indications and conditions that may require AFOs.

Neurological or Neuromuscular problems

Developmental delay

Cerebral palsy

Spina bifida

Down Syndrome

Muscular dystrophy

Post polio

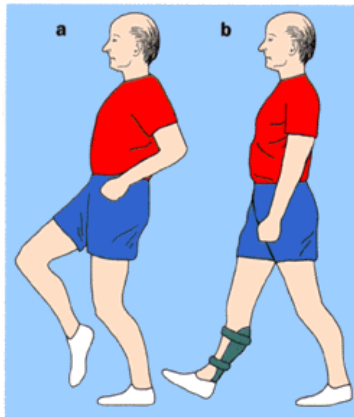
Head and spinal cord injuries

Stroke

A very common condition for the prescription of an AFO is foot drop.

Foot drop is a deceptively simple name for a potentially complex problem. Foot drop can be associated with a variety of conditions such as dorsiflexor injuries, peripheral nerve injuries, stroke, neuropathies, drug toxicities, or diabetes.

As seen in (a) the patient could easily catch his toe as he swung it forward for the next step. With an AFO as seen in (b) his foot is plantar flexed or raised to clear the ground thus eliminating stumbles or falls.



## Common AFO Types



Solid Ankle  
Foam Lined



Articulated  
With Motion  
Limiter



Dynamic

## Customized



### WARNING!

If you notice any of the following problems, call your doctor or healthcare professional immediately

- The AFO is loose, cracked or broken.
- The AFO rubs, presses or pinches, causing irritation.
- The AFO is uncomfortably tight.
- Excessive swelling develops above or below the AFO.
- Toes below the AFO are numb and difficult to use.
- Toes are discolored.
- Moderate discomfort changes to severe or constant pain.
- Offensive odor develops from sores under the AFO.

## Ankle Foot Orthosis (AFO) Process Guide

### Prescription: AFO



### Now what?

## Purpose

The purpose of your AFO is to provide necessary external support to your foot and leg when a physical weakness or muscular impairment is present. The AFO also provides a corrected anatomical alignment with allowed or restricted motion as prescribed by your physician. The goal is to assist in achieving an optimum gait pattern during ambulation.

## How is it paid for?

Custom AFO's can be very expensive. From a few hundred dollars to over a thousand dollars. You always have the option to pay cash but if the AFO was prescribed by a physician your insurance company may cover most if not all of this device.



## Where do I go to get an AFO?

Lower extremity orthoses such as an AFO require a high level of skill and attention to detail in order to ensure proper fit and function. ABC Certified Othotists fit these requirements. Most have a 4 year college education and specialized training in Orthotics. Part of their training includes a one year orthotic residency and a rigorous national certification examination is also required.



To find an ABC certified orthotist in your area visit <http://www.abcop.org/Credentialing.asp>

## Custom AFO Process

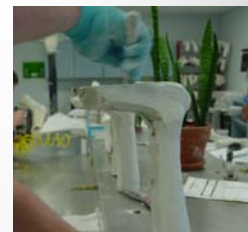
The process consists of three steps:

- 1) Creating a negative mold, where an impression of the foot and calf are taken. (Usually by casting).



A circumferential wrap cast is applied with the patient in a seated position with knee flexed and hip flexed and adducted for tone reduction.

- 2) Generating a positive mold. (By pouring plaster into the cast to harden and later used for modification and fabrication).



Precise modification of the positive model is essential to accomplishing the desired neurophysiological and biomechanical goals.

- 3) Generating and fitting the actual AFO to the patient. (Custom fitting by an orthotist to achieve maximal function and comfort).



Several fittings may be necessary to ensure custom fit, comfort and function. These orthoses must fit intimately, be comfortable, and fit into footwear.

## Follow Up Visits

The orthotist will schedule a follow-up visit to make sure the orthosis is working and to make sure you are wearing it correctly. Thereafter, appointments with your orthotist should be arranged at least once a year. DO NOT attempt to repair the orthosis yourself.

## Helpful Hints

Wear or bring shorts for the initial casting and final delivery. Bring lace up shoes with a 3/4" lift for the final delivery

## Fascinating foot and ankle facts

1. 25% of the bones in your body are in your feet.
2. The average person takes 8,000 to 10,000 steps per day.
3. The average person will walk over 100,000 miles in their lifetime, or more than 4 trips around the world.
4. Women have four times as many foot and ankle problems as men - ill fitting, high-heeled footwear is commonly the problem.
5. More than 75% of people will experience foot and ankle problems in their lifetime.



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"Demonstration Project on Prosthetics and Orthotics"