Ankle-Foot Orthosis (AFO)

An ankle-foot orthosis (AFO) is a lightweight, custom molded plastic shell, which sometimes has pads and straps. There are various styles of AFOs, including solid ankle, articulated, post leafspring and floor reaction. All of them are designed to provide support for and help maintain proper positioning of the ankle and foot. AFOs keep the foot and ankle in good alignment, provide stability and help improve weight-bearing and mobility.

Putting on an AFO

1. Apply a cotton stockinette or sock that extends past the top of your brace.
2. Loosen all the AFO straps.
3. Slide the AFO into position, ensuring that the heel is down all the way in the AFO. To ensure that the heel is as far into the AFO as possible, bend the knee, and apply slight pressure over the instep area.
4. Secure the ankle (instep) strap with enough tension to prevent the heel from slipping.
5. Secure the calf strap to secure the AFO.
6. Slide the foot and AFO into the shoe. Tie or secure the shoe to prevent the AFO from sliding within footwear. A slightly larger and wider shoe may be necessary to fit the foot and the AFO. Shoes with fabric fasteners (like Velcro closures) and wide toe boxes are typically easier to put on over the AFO.