

Leather Gauntlet AFO Wear and Care Instructions

The Leather Gauntlet Ankle Foot Orthosis (AFO) is clinically designed to hold your foot and ankle in an aligned position, providing increased support and function. The AFO has been designed to be worn with a shoe and it is crucial to the function of the brace that a shoe be worn at all times.

Donning the AFO

Lace up or Velcro the orthosis to a snug fit at first, then put on the shoe using a shoe horn if necessary. Always wear a sock, stocking, or similar garment under the orthosis to reduce friction and protect from perspiration. Remember to keep the sock wrinkle-free without placing excess pressure on the toes. Using talcum powder and changing the sock promptly after perspiration buildup will also keep you more comfortable. Natural fiber socks, such as cotton, allow better air circulation and absorption of perspiration.

It is important to maintain the same shoe heel height for which your orthosis was designed. Excessive height strains your knees and back creating instability. Heels which are too low may also cause knee and back pain. Shoes worn with an orthosis should provide sufficient support: slippers, sandals and loafers may be inappropriate, depending on your foot and ankle condition.

Patients with the Leather Gauntlet AFO should check regularly for signs of skin pressure and irregular shoe wear. Report your concerns to our office immediately.

SELF-EXAMINATION

Your Leather Gauntlet AFO was made to fit you properly and provide the greatest degree of comfort. Like breaking in a new pair of shoes, it may take a brief period before the orthosis feels natural. We recommend a five day break-in schedule, starting with wearing the brace 2-4 hours initially, adding two hours of wear until up to full time wear.

A properly fitting orthosis exerts a firm, steady pressure, similar to an open-palm hand pushing against the skin. It should not cause any sharp, stabbing pain or create bruises, calluses or blisters. Should this occur, call our office immediately and arrange an appointment for an adjustment.

Occasionally, extended periods of standing and hot, or humid weather will result in some swelling. Remove the orthosis and elevate your leg until the swelling subsides. If it persists or becomes painful, notify your healthcare professional at once.

It is also important to maintain a relatively consistent weight. Your orthosis was custom designed for your weight and dimensions; extreme gain or loss may cause improper fit. You will need to visit your healthcare professional if this should occur. Growing youngsters should be monitored at regular intervals to maintain proper fit.

Daily examination of skin in contact with the orthosis should become a habit. A new orthosis may cause some redness, which should disappear within 15 minutes after removing the device. If the redness does not disappear, make an appointment to have this checked.

People with diabetes, vascular insufficiency or neuropathy are especially vulnerable to skin irritation, particularly in bony areas including the bottoms of feet. Extra care should be taken and even minor skin irritations should be treated promptly.

PROPER HYGIENE

It makes sense to keep both your orthosis and yourself as clean as possible. Any skin covered by the orthosis should be washed daily with warm water and mild soap. Generous rinsing ensures removal of all lather since dried soap irritates the skin. Thoroughly clean the bottoms of your feet and between the toes to avoid bacteria and dirt collections. The skin should be completely dry before wearing the orthosis. Shaving your legs may cause an itchy rash or skin irritation.

Your Leather Gauntlet AFO should be cleaned regularly with a solution of ½ alcohol and ½ water using a clean cotton towel. Do not attempt to hasten drying by using a hair dryer or placing the appliance in front of a heater. Your orthosis may be towel-dried or left to dry at room temperature. Use a quality leather cleaner and conditioner on the outside of the orthosis. Talcum powder will help prevent odors.

If your brace becomes less comfortable, no longer fits, or if at any point you have questions or concerns, please contact your Orthotist or call to schedule an appointment.

Thank you for choosing Washington Orthotics and Prosthetics!

