

Foot orthosis (FO) information sheet

What is 'Orthotics'?

Orthotics is the specialist field concerned with the prescription, design and production of **orthoses** or orthotic devices. These are externally applied devices used to compensate for the impairments of the structure and function of the neuromuscular and skeletal systems. **Orthotists** are specialised healthcare professionals who prescribe, fit and fine tune orthoses.

What are FOs?

Foot orthoses are devices designed to provide support and apply a force to the foot that will alter the way the patient walks. They can be made in different lengths, materials and with different specifications to address individual problems. Generally, the orthosis should be (after a period of breaking in) worn most of the time the patient is walking, or for time periods as agreed with the patient consultant or primary health care professional. The foot orthoses are specifically designed and made for each individual patient and must always be used in conjunction with and inside suitable footwear.



Full length foot orthosis



3/4 length foot orthosis

Putting on and wearing the foot orthoses

- Check (in the case of a pair) which FO is for which foot.
- Place the FO in the footwear ensuring that the back of the FO is located as far as possible 'up against' the back of the heel of the footwear.
- Apply the footwear as normal and tie the shoelace(s) or fasten the strap(s) firmly.
- Wear the FO for short periods initially and gradually build up the wear.

Suitable footwear

The most suitable footwear should have the following design criteria:

- Have either lace up or secure strap fastening.
- Have an opening that is forward enough to allow the foot to enter with the FO in place.

Suitable footwear (Cont.)

- Have a low to medium heel height.
- Have a high upper around the heel with good support.

Court style shoes are usually unsuitable. Trainers or ankle boots usually provide the best all round support. Footwear may have deep or removable insoles that can be taken out to allow more room for the FO. A low opening and an adjustable fastening (i.e., laces or Velcro) are also more suited as they allow for easier entry and increased depth adjustment of the footwear over the FOs.

When to arrange a follow up appointment

If any of the following occur, please discontinue use and contact the orthotic clinic:

- The orthosis is causing pain or discomfort.
- There are red marks that do not fade after wearing the FOs.
- The orthosis becomes ill-fitting.
- The orthosis becomes damaged, fatigued or it is not performing as expected.

Care

- Clean the FO using a soft cloth/sponge damp with warm water and mild soap. Do not submerge the FO in water as this will damage the glue and materials. Gently dry with a soft cloth or leave to air dry before use.
- With use, FOs may start to show signs of wear. Soft parts such as top covers can sometimes be repaired or replaced - please contact us if you think this is needed.

Clinic contact details: _____