

Guidelines for SAAFO

Introduction

Your physician has prescribed the Short Articulating Ankle Foot Orthosis (SAAFO) for treatment of a disorder of your foot and/or ankle. This orthosis, or brace, is designed to prevent certain rotary forces from acting on your sub-talar joint (the joint below your ankle) and mid-foot area while allowing your ankle joint to bend normally. The brace is NOT designed to hold your heel firmly. We rely on your shoe to hold your heel securely. Your heel may actually rise up as you walk, especially if your shoe is new or stiff soled, or if you have a tight heel cord. This should diminish over time.

Shoe Fitting

Because the orthosis covers the top of your foot, a wider and sometimes longer shoe is required for comfortable fit. We recommend an athletic shoe initially. This type of shoe is usually flexible and well made, and will easily accommodate your new orthosis. We recommend you purchase your shoes before delivery of your brace. Please buy a shoe at least 1/2 size larger than you wear, and 1-2 sizes wider (width in a shoe is actually the amount of material over your instep and toes, not the dimension of the sole). Always remove the insole from the shoe on the side you will wear your orthosis; this provides extra room for the brace and evens your leg lengths out. Don't wear your shoes until you come to pick up your orthosis, so if they do not fit you are able to return them.

General Wear

Unless otherwise indicated by your orthotist, we recommend a gradual break-in period for your SAAFO. Your foot requires time to get accustomed to the support of the orthosis, wearing it too much at the start may increase the risk of pain and complications. To avoid this, begin wearing it for one to two hours at a time as tolerated. Always remove the orthosis for 30-60 minutes between periods of use. This can be three to four times a day as your schedule allows. In this manner, your cumulative time in the orthosis builds, but the consecutive time is not excessive. Each day, according to how your foot feels, gradually increase the time period you wear the brace. At the end of ten days you should be wearing it for most of the day.

Never wear your orthosis for an athletic endeavor or a full day of shopping when you first receive it! This can put you at risk for bruising and pain and will require the tissue to heal before you can resume wear of the orthosis.

If you experience increased pain, redness or tissue irritation, stop wearing the orthosis and promptly call your orthotist for an appointment to adjust the brace. Remember, the road to healing is a process, not an instantaneous event. If you are patient and cooperative, your foot will be on the road to recovery in a reasonable amount of time.

Your orthotist is:

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