

Leather Ankle Gauntlet AFO

Description of Device

This orthosis (external brace) is typically custom made for patients. It is fabricated from leather and has an internal frame work of thermoplastic to help provide support to the ankle and foot. Closures can include velcro or laces on the device. There are many different types and designs, but often times this leather ankle gauntlet AFO extends from the lower third of the calf down to and including the foot. It is important to remember that this gauntlet (and most others used for the ankle and foot) needs to be used in conjunction with a shoe whenever your foot is on the ground. The best shoes to use are ones with either laces or velcro closures.

This custom leather ankle gauntlet AFO is designed as a conservative method of treatment to help you manage the foot and ankle conditions that you may currently suffer from. Common conditions being managed by this type of AFO are :

- 1.) Posterior tibial tendon dysfunction (PTTD)
- 2.) Ankle arthritis or DJD (degenerative joint disease)
- 3.) Chronic ankle pain
- 4.) Severe pronation or pes planus
- 5.) Sport Injuries, such as chronic ankle sprains

Application

1. Apply a long sock or cotton stockinette prior to donning the brace. This helps to wick away moisture.
2. For ease of application, it is best to loosen the AFO down through the instep.
3. Next, slide your foot inside the AFO. This would be similar to the feeling you might get when putting on a pair of boots or high top shoes.
4. It is important to make sure that your heel is well seated in the orthosis. This means that the heel is all the way down and back inside the AFO.
5. Create a snug fit by tightening the laces or velcro. You want it to feel snug, or comfortably tight. It should not be painful to make the brace snug.
6. The shoe may need to be opened more wide to allow the AFO and foot to slide into the shoe. Shoes that come with a wide toe box are the easiest to get on over the AFO.
7. You do not necessarily need to go out and buy a special shoe to accommodate the AFO. If needed, removing the insole from your shoe to create additional room for the AFO may help. You may need a shoe that is a size larger or a size wider. It is best to bring the brace with you to the shoe store in this case to optimize fit and avoid guesswork.

Wearing Schedule

When you first get the orthosis, you can start by wearing it for 30 minutes on the first day. Next, after that 30 minutes is complete, it is important to remove the orthosis and check your skin. It is possible to have some slight red marks that are noticeable on the skin. These should fade away within 20-30 minutes. Areas that might show slight redness can include an individual's arch, instep or bony landmarks on the foot and ankle.

If the redness fails to subside within 20-30 minutes, or if you notice that your skin is itchy, blistering or bruised then it is important to call your orthotist. It is highly recommended not to put the AFO back on at this point and to schedule a follow up visit.

If the skin is ok, and there is no discomfort, then it is ok to put the orthosis back on for 1 hour at a time for the rest of the first day.

On the second day, put the leather gauntlet AFO on for two (2) hour intervals. After each 2 hour interval, remove the orthosis and check the skin. If the skin is ok, reapply the orthosis for 2 hours at a time for the rest of the day. Check the skin when the orthosis is removed. If the skin is ok, gradually increase wearing time by 1 hour each day. - It can take patients approximately 1 week-10 days to be able to wear the orthosis all day in some cases. - Moreover, it should be stated that if your physician requests you to wear the orthosis with more initial wearing time then this is the instruction you should follow.

Cleaning and Maintenance

It is best to clean the orthosis regularly with a solution that is comprised of ½ alcohol and ½ water, while also utilizing a clean cotton towel. Please do not attempt to quicken the drying process by using a heat source like the dryer or a hair dryer. You may towel dry the leather gauntlet AFO or it can be left at room temperature to dry. You can also utilize a quality leather cleaner and conditioner on the outside of the orthosis. Talcum powder is used to help prevent odors, if any arise. Do not submerge the leather gauntlet AFO in water! If the leather ankle gauntlet becomes wet, it is best to let it dry thoroughly before reapplying the brace.

Tips & Problem Solving

It is best to make sure that the heel is well seated inside the leather gauntlet AFO. This will help prevent the foot and ankle from moving around inside the brace, which can cause friction problems with the skin.

Making sure the brace is snug is a must.



It is not advised to use the orthosis inside of shoes with varying heel heights.

If you have any problems putting the brace on or inside of a shoe, you can consider using baby powder to help reduce friction. The use of baby powder can also help to reduce any squeaking sounds that may occur.

If there are any skin related issues with respect to the brace, it is important to contact your orthotist immediately.