



DAFO

Donning Instructions

1. Prepare

If possible, arrange for your child to sit with hips and knees flexed, facing you. Place a suitable sock (a moderately thick cotton-synthetic blend is best) on your child's foot and smooth out any wrinkles or bagginess.

2. Scoop Foot into Brace

Open the foot portion of the brace and slide in the foot, making sure the heel is fully seated in the back of the brace (try pushing down on your child's flexed knee to help seat the heel). Pull the brace up and down slightly while pushing the top of the foot back. It may help to rest your child's foot on your knee.

3. Insert instep pad

Lift one side of the top/front opening of the brace and insert one side of the instep pad underneath. Do the same for the other side. Massage the instep pad and the top of the brace to settle the pad down onto the foot and resettle the foot back into the brace.

4. Attach straps

Flex the ankle into slight dorsiflexion by pushing up under the patient's forefoot. Securely tighten and attach the instep strap. Compress the brace around the forefoot and then securely tighten and attach the forefoot strap (if applicable).

Tips

- If your child's foot moved while you were securing the straps, the brace may be too loose for optimal foot control.
- All of the straps have a specific purpose. For best results, fasten each one snugly.

Suggested Break-In Guidelines:

- For new patients, initial wearing time should only be an hour or two. This will allow monitoring for problems. Check skin for areas of irritation and redness.
- Increase wearing time by one hour per day. The break-in period typically lasts two to three weeks. After this period, children are typically able to adapt to wearing braces full time.
- The break-in schedule may vary depending on the child's level of involvement or past experience with bracing.

What to Expect:

- The first week or two may be a time of less balance, fatigue, and irritability as the child adapts to the new foot position provided by the brace. Expect a learning curve as the patient acquires new balancing skills.
- Additional therapy time during the break-in period can be useful.
- Some skin redness, especially under the compression of the instep strap and pad, is common during the break-in period—any irritation should go away within twenty minutes of removing the brace.



Concerns:

Contact your practitioner if any of the following issues arise. These concerns may signal a need for the brace to be adjusted:

- Complaints of discomfort, especially after the child has been wearing the brace comfortably for a while.
- Any red mark or irritation that does not go away within twenty minutes after removing the brace. Discontinue wear if redness or irritation does not go away.
- Function does not improve after a week of wearing.

Care

DAFOs should be worn with shoes. Without shoes, they are vulnerable to damage, they do not support the patient in the intended way, and there is a significant risk of slippage as the bottom of the plastic is slick.

Clean the DAFOs using a sponge or soft brush with mild soap and warm water. Towel dry, then allow a few hours for thorough air drying. Do not dry with heat.

Over time, when well worn, your child's DAFOs may show signs of wear. If your DAFO is still effective but has distinct wear, arrange a follow-up visit with our office. Refurbishments like replacing worn-out straps and padding, heating and trimming plastic can extend the useful wear time of the brace.

Choosing shoes

To support the braces, look for shoes that:

- support the heel
- tie or strap snugly over the instep
- have room in the toe box (width and depth)
- have a padded insole glued or placed in the bottom that can be removed after purchase to increase the available volume
- have a consistent fit. Once you find a brand you like, go to that specific brand again for dependable fit
- Sometimes, a wider width of your child's size will do the trick

Socks

For comfort, look for socks that:

- fit smoothly against the skin (no bunching or folding)
- wick perspiration away from skin
- are seamless
- resist wrinkling
- have a separated big toe (to use with braces that have a toe abduction strap)

For DAFO brace styles that go above the ankle, consider a sports sock or similar knee high sock that is high enough to fold back down over the leg part of the brace. Soccer socks often work well and come in lots of colors!

If you were given specific manufacturer care instructions for your orthosis please be sure to follow the directions closely.