



## Lower Limb Orthoses – Care and Advice

### Lower Limb Orthoses

Your consultant/doctor or health professional has instructed you to wear a lower limb orthosis following your injury. This leaflet covers the following orthoses:



Cricket pad splint – this keeps your leg straight at all times



Hinged knee brace – this allows for supported bending of the knee

### Why do I need to wear the orthosis?

You need to wear an orthosis to allow for healing of the bone and/or soft tissues. Your doctor or therapist will decide which orthosis you require.

### How long do I need to wear the orthosis?

The length of time that the orthosis is needed can vary depending on your injury; your doctor or therapist will provide instructions around this.

### How do I manage once I am discharged?

Wearing an orthosis can affect how you manage your daily activities; the information below will give you guidance on how to manage.

#### Washing and Dressing

You will likely need to strip wash in a seated position temporarily until the orthosis and any dressings are removed. You must keep the orthosis on when washing the rest of your body, however, avoid getting it wet.

To clean the skin underneath the orthosis, undo the straps and gently use a damp cloth over the skin, avoiding any wounds or dressings. Ensure the skin is fully dry before reapplying it.

You should wear baggy clothing over the top of the orthosis. It may be necessary to cut clothing for a better fit.

It might be difficult to reach your feet; you may require assistance from people around you to get items of clothing on e.g. trousers, underwear, shoes and socks.

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Your skin is prone to pressure damage when wearing an orthosis. To reduce the risk of developing a pressure sore, you can remove the orthosis for short periods whilst resting with your leg extended.

We strongly advise that you check your skin regularly. Look out for:

- Redness that does not disappear when the orthosis is removed
- Blisters
- Soreness
- Skin breakdown
- New swelling or pain

If you notice any of the above, please inform your GP immediately.

## **Sleeping**

You must keep your splint on when sleeping, as you may move unconsciously in your sleep.

## **Driving**

You will not be able to drive whilst wearing a splint as you must be able to comfortably control your vehicle and perform emergency manoeuvres. You can discuss this further with your consultant.

DVLA advises that drivers do not need to contact the DVLA if they have had a bone fracture. However, if recovery after a bone fracture is prolonged for more than three months, please seek advice from your orthopaedic consultant on when it is safe to return to driving and if your insurance company needs to be informed.

## **Exercises**

Although the orthosis restricts movement at your knee, it is important to keep your other joints moving. Your physiotherapist will advise you on what exercise you can and can't do.

It is normal to feel some soreness when doing your exercises and for a short period afterwards. However, if the exercises are aggravating pain or causing other uncomfortable symptoms, and it is not settling with pain relief and rest, please stop the exercises and inform a healthcare professional at your next follow-up appointment.

## **Department address and contact information:**

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## Accessibility

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