

# Instructions for Use

## Placement of AFO brace in shoes

- Do not wear shoes that have thick soles. Avoid any rocker bottom style shoe. Velcro straps are preferred over lace closures. **Size up. Usually, you will need to increase shoe size by at least ½ size and 1 width.**
- Pairing shoes with added balance is critical for success.
- Remove any footbed that features arch support.
- Place the AFO brace on top of a thin, flat cushioned layer or the spacer that often comes with diabetic shoes, if applicable.
- Make sure the brace is snug against the back of the shoe.
- DO NOT place the brace on top of a shoe insole or orthotic.
- DO NOT place the brace into any rocker style or thick soled shoes.

## Placing the foot into the AFO brace

- While seated, point your toes and slide your foot into the shoe and brace.
- The brace is easiest to put on if the knee is maintained just above the foot and not allowed to turn out.
- Hold onto the back upper portion of the brace to help slide the foot in.
- Tuck in the tongue of the brace under the outside Velcro portion of the brace and pull straps over and across the ankle. Adjust the straps so that neither are too tight nor too loose.
- After fastening the two Velcro straps, the shoes should be firmly latched and then you will be ready to stand up and walk.

## Walking for the first time with an AFO BRACE

- If you use a cane or walker, continue to use your cane or walker when wearing your brace(s).
- If the brace causes any discomfort or results in any rubbing, check to make sure the shoe fits properly.
- Expect there to be a “break in” period of getting used to walking with the brace. Once comfortable, wear the device as long as you feel stable and secure.
- Your brace(s) should ideally be worn every day, both inside and outside the home.

Many falls can be prevented.

**Over 80% of AFO brace patients relate that they didn't feel as though they needed a “break-in” period as the brace felt good and supportive. Commonly, patients will use the brace more consistently as they get used to it and increasingly appreciate its effectiveness.**



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# Simple Exercises for Reducing Fall Risk

Strength training is vital. These are safe and gentle exercise suggestions for you to practice at home. For additional needs consult with Dr. Mechanik

## Straight Leg Raise

Total leg workout that will assist with walking, transferring and increase leg strength to help with walking, transfers and stairs. especially with getting in and out of bed. Works muscles in the stomach and back.

1. Lie on bed, straighten right leg and place left foot
2. Raise right leg with knee locked.
3. Lower right leg slowly and do not
4. Complete a set with one leg then repeat with the other leg. Allow to go all the way down to bed.



## Heel Slide

1. Bend right knee and pull heel towards buttocks.
2. Slowly straighten knee.
3. Go slow.
4. Complete a set of 10 leg raises with one leg, then repeat with the other leg.

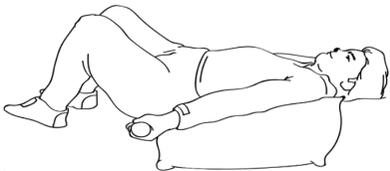


## Elbow Flexion

(Can use light weights)

Assists with all daily activities.

1. Turn palms up so facing ceiling.
2. Keeping upper arms on bed slowly bend BOTH elbows.
3. Slowly straighten arm.
4. Repeat 10 times.

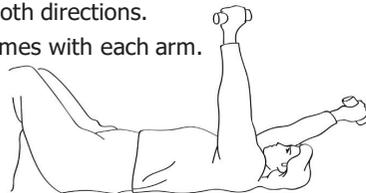


## Shoulder Flexion

(Can use light weights)

Increases arm strength with dressing, cleaning, cooking and reaching for objects overhead.

1. Point thumb towards ceiling.
2. Slowly lift right arm over your head keeping elbow straight.
3. Bring it back down to your side.
4. Lift arm up over your head and back down.
5. Go slow in both directions.
6. Repeat 10 times with each arm.



By making minor changes, you can lower your chances of falling.

**Important: For the four exercises below, be sure to use a sturdy chair that does not roll.**

## Toe Raises

Most older adults are fearful of falling forward so they push backwards. This exercise helps them feel more comfortable leaning backward; **strengthens backs of legs which will assist with balance.** The goal is to complete the exercise safely without any support on the chair.

1. Rest hands on chair, use legs for balance, not arms.
2. Go up and down on toes.
3. Go slowly.
4. Do not lean forward.
5. Repeat 10 times.



## Marching in Place

Teaches weight shifting and standing on one foot which will help with walking.

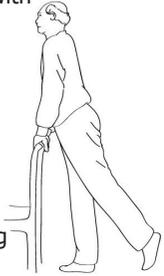
1. Rest hands on chair.
2. Keeping back as straight as able, possible lift right knee towards your chair and hold for a moment.
3. Slowly lower right leg.
4. Keeping back as straight as possible lift left knee up towards your chest and hold for a moment.
5. Slowly lower left leg.
6. Repeat 10 times.



## Standing Leg Extension

This strengthens the muscles in the back of the leg and increases confidence with stepping backwards.

1. Rest hands on chair.
2. Slowly kick left leg back, keeping knee straight.
3. It should be a small movement. If you start to lean forward you are kicking too far.
4. Do not let leg drop back to starting position, control its descent.
5. Repeat 10 times with each leg.



## Standing Hip Abduction

Strengthens hip stabilizers that assist with walking.

1. Rest hands on chair.
2. Kick leg out to side, keeping knee straight and toes pointed forward.
3. Make sure the kick movements are side to side and not to the front or back.
4. It should be a small movement.
5. Do not let leg drop back to starting position, control its descent.
6. Repeat 10 times with each leg.

