

KAFO (Knee-Ankle Foot Orthosis)

General Description:

The term KAFO is an acronym that stands for Knee-Ankle-Foot Orthosis and describes the part of the body that this device encompasses. This device extends from the thigh to the foot and is generally used to control instabilities in the lower limb by maintaining alignment and controlling motion. Instabilities can be either due to skeletal problems: broken bones, arthritic joints, bowleg, knock-knee, knee hyperextension or muscular weakness and paralysis. With this in mind, the indications for the use of a KAFO are many and varied and any one particular design is specific to the needs of the person it is made for.

There are two very general categories of KAFOs: Metal and plastic designs. The metal design consists of a metal structure shaped to the limb and upholstered with leather at the points where the device makes contact with a person's body. This is the more traditional of the two designs. The plastic design is most frequently encountered today and usually consists of a plastic device custom molded to the person's body with metal components in key structural areas only. The reason for the increased use of the plastic is that it is lighter in weight and is considered to be more cosmetic.