

Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists  
**Product Recognition Program**

**Report of the review of the Original AFO Assist®**



Available online at [www.caot.ca/prp](http://www.caot.ca/prp)





Report last updated December, 2018

### Disclaimers

The information compiled in this report was designed for informational purposes and to communicate the final conclusions of a documented review process. The decision to award a seal of recognition **does not supersede or replace other codes, requirements or regulations** set by authoritative organizations of a specific jurisdiction. CAOT encourages health professionals to act in a responsible manner and according to best practices for the recommendation, assessment, installation and maintenance of this product. It is critical to **follow the recommendations set by the manufacturer and/or distributor** of this product and, when relevant, engage domain expert for training, use, installation, maintenance and repair.

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**Specific questions** related to this product(s) (including usage, availability, pricing, etc.) should be addressed directly to the manufacturer and/or distributor. Please visit [www.AFOassist.com](http://www.AFOassist.com). Concerns or questions related to the content of this report should be addressed to Julie Lapointe, Director of Knowledge Translation Programs, at [practice@caot.ca](mailto:practice@caot.ca) or at 1(800) 434-2268 ext. 260.

The conclusions presented in the current report are derived from the best information available. In the case that new information becomes available and grants a modification to the conclusions, CAOT reserves the right to update and issue a new report of this product at any time.

### Acknowledgement

The generation of this report would not have been possible without the contribution of occupational therapists and members of the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT).



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## Executive Summary

The Original AFO Assist® is an innovative dressing aid used to help don an ankle foot orthosis (AFO) and a shoe. This product comes in three pieces: a shoe platform, an AFO cradle and a foot funnel (see pictures beside). Reviewers recommended that The Original AFO Assist® be accepted for the CAOT Product Recognition Program. Information and recommendations regarding the performance of the product are provided in this report.



**The Original AFO Assist® is recognized by CAOT.**



## Review report

### The purpose of this product

The Original AFO Assist® comes in three pieces working together to allow users to don their ankle foot orthosis (AFO) and shoe while lying in bed or sitting. Its design will accommodate different foot sizes. The Original AFO Assist® will support adults or older children who have difficulties donning an AFO because of physical limitations. Users require the cognitive capabilities to coordinate the steps and setup involved in using this product.

### Performance of the product (efficacy, usability, safety, reliability, durability)

- The polypropylene material of this product is robust and all pieces appear sturdy.
- The instructions and the video are clear and The Original AFO Assist® is generally easy to use and assemble, particularly the cradle and shoe platform pieces. The instructions of the foot funnel and manipulation of the strings could however be made clearer according to the reviewers. The company has responded to this issue in the revised version of these instructions.
- The angle of the AFO cradle can be modified and then fixed to allow users to place it at different angles. This is an improvement compared to earlier versions of the product.
- Users will need to make sure they position their shoe platform securely against a wall, but otherwise this product does not require a lot of maintenance or monitoring.
- The only safety issue raised by reviewers is related to the size of this product (i.e. the dressing aid is 18 cm (7") wide and 27 cm (10-1/2") long to ensure stability) and the fact that it needs to be placed in a strategic place to avoid being a tripping hazard.
- The required space to safely position the product might be difficult for users living in environments with limited space.
- The website of the company features a short video that demonstrates how to use The Original AFO Assist®. At the time of review, reviewers commented that the video showed an earlier version of the product and that this may be confusing. The current video is now demonstrating the latest version of this product.

### Important recommendations

To avoid tripping hazards, reviewers suggest placing The Original AFO Assist® strategically in the home, avoiding confined spaces and high traffic areas. Avoid placing the product too close or in an entry way.



## Economic considerations

With all the features that this product provides, reviewers found that it offers good value for money for someone who wish to be independent in their dressing activity.

## Scientific evidence

To our knowledge, The Original AFO Assist® is the only dressing aid available to assist with the donning of an ankle foot orthosis. No research publications were found related to the efficacy of this unique product.

## Review committee

The Original AFO Assist® has been reviewed by four occupational therapists, ranging from 9 years to 29 years of occupational therapy practice experience in diverse home care and health care settings. For all of them, the prescription of assistive devices and adaptive equipment is a predominant part of their role.

## Final recommendation

This product would most likely be recommended to cognitively intact adults or older children who wish to be independent in donning their AFO and shoe. Such situations can occur with clients with a variety of conditions and thus will support the practice of occupational therapists working in a variety of settings. Clients must still be able to reach for their foot and have adequate hand function to manipulate straps on their AFO and shoe. For instance, it could be particularly useful for individuals with hemiplegia (i.e. paralysis or weakness of one side of the body) who have limited capacity in one hand but full function in the other. It would be ideal to allow clients to have a trial period with this device before purchase, as using this product does require some patience and might not work for everyone<sup>1</sup>. Some clients may choose to have a family member continue to help put on their AFO and shoe. Reviewers recommended that The Original AFO Assist® be accepted for the CAOT Product Recognition Program.

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<sup>1</sup>The company offers a 30-day refund policy that can be consulted on their website.