

## Caregiver Application Instructions

*The following instructions apply to the majority of TC Flex orthoses. Some of these designs are available with alternate strap designs and may need to be applied in a slightly different way. Full Blocker and Dorsi-Blocker orthoses have a posterior opening with easy entry from the back.*

1. Sit facing the patient so that the hip and knee are flexed at 90 degrees and the foot is positioned on the floor or on your knee. Apply a medium thickness sock without excessive embroidery or trim to the foot and leg, smoothing out all wrinkles. A sock made of blended fibers or wicking material is preferred to an all cotton sock. Gently bend the ankle and align the foot as close as possible to the alignment of the orthosis.



5. Press down on the instep pad and knee to align and settle the foot and ankle inside the orthosis.



2. Position the orthosis behind the patient's leg while you spread open the plastic midfoot flaps.



6. Pull up on the forefoot and gently slide the foot back into the heel cup. Fasten the Velcro® instep strap snugly.



3. Pull the opened orthosis forward as you position the patient's heel into the heel cup. Press the patient's knee down and move the plastic up and down until the heel is firmly seated into the heel cup. The plastic midfoot flaps will close comfortably around the foot when the heel is in the correct position.



7. Compress the flaps, then fasten the Velcro® forefoot strap snugly. If the foot has moved out of position while the straps were fastened, reposition the ankle and refasten the instep strap first followed by the forefoot strap until the foot is securely positioned inside the orthosis.



4. Peel open one side of the midfoot flap and slide one edge of the instep pad beneath the plastic. Peel open the other midfoot flap and slide the rest of the instep pad beneath the plastic on that side.



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# TC Flex Caregiver Application Instructions (continued)

## Skin Checks and Wearing Time

During the first two weeks, it is important to remove the orthosis several times a day to check for skin problems and other areas of concern. Any red marks should disappear within 20 minutes. Marks lasting longer should be reported to your orthotist immediately because an adjustment may be needed to relieve the area. If pressure areas occur after wearing the orthosis for several months, it may indicate that the orthosis is too small and requires replacement. In some cases, switching to a thinner sock may help alleviate tightness when there has been overall growth, and the orthotist may also have strategies to extend the life of the orthosis. Contact your orthotist whenever you have problems or concerns about the fit or function of the orthosis.

## Finding The Right Shoes

Shoes are an integral component to the orthotic treatment program, and finding the right pair can be challenging. Fortunately, it's gotten easier to find appropriate shoes because of the popularity of athletic footwear. Athletic shoes with laces or Velcro® closures



tend to be deeper than dressy shoes and often have insoles that can be removed with varying degrees of difficulty. Generally, the more expensive the shoe, the more likely it is to have an insole that is easily removed to make room for the orthosis. Shoes that have a wide toe box and laces that begin closer to the toe typically open up more and accommodate the orthosis better. New Balance, K-Swiss, Sketchers, Stride Rite, and even shoes at some of the less expensive shoe stores can be used with some orthoses. "Keeping Pace" has an extra depth shoe available to parents at 888-526-0020 or keepingpace.com. Markell TM-2000 shoes and Answer2 shoes are available from your orthotist and have extra space to accommodate the orthosis. When purchasing shoes from retail stores it is sometimes necessary to buy shoes a size or two larger for the foot with the orthosis. If the orthosis is worn on only one side it may be necessary to buy two pairs of the same shoe in different sizes. If you run into problems, your orthotist may be able to provide you with additional suggestions.

## Avoiding The Wrong Shoes

There comes a time when almost every person wearing an orthosis wants to wear it with a dressier shoe. Adult footwear manufacturers like Rockport, New Balance and others have made progress in this area by offering business or dressy shoes with removable insoles and more space. Unfortunately, children's shoe manufacturers have lagged behind in this area. For the occasional time a dressy shoe is needed, parents can sometimes find lace up styles in boots or shoes at some of the big retail stores or cheaper discount shoe stores. It should be stressed that these shoes do not provide the same support and stability as laced or Velcro® athletic shoes and should be worn for very brief periods of time. Open back shoes and sandals are not appropriate and should always be avoided. Dressy shoes should have the same heel height as the shoes the person generally wears with their orthosis because the heel height has an effect on the biomechanical alignment of the orthosis.

## Care of TC Flex Orthoses

TC Flex orthoses are manufactured from a variety of thin, high temperature plastic materials. The specific design and components were selected by your orthotist to provide the best orthosis based on the functional requirements of the patient. Orthoses should be worn with shoes when walking outside or on hard surfaces that can scratch the bottom of the orthoses. Scratches and excess wear on the bottom can lead to fractures of the orthosis. Except in therapy, shoes must be worn over the orthosis or the warranty will be voided.

An instep pad is provided with every orthosis and is used inside the mid-foot flaps to protect the skin and prevent pinching. The instep pad is an important component of the TC Flex system, and the fit of the orthosis is dependent on its inclusion. Contact your orthotist if the instep pad is lost so that it can be replaced as soon as possible.

Your TC Flex orthosis can be cleaned using a soft cloth, mild soap and water. Wipe out the orthosis regularly and allow it to air dry. Straps can be cleaned the same way, but take several hours to dry. **Do not** dry the straps using heat of any kind, including a hair dryer.

If you find that there is sock lint consistently inside the heel cup, it may indicate that the heel is not completely down in the orthosis. Check your application of the orthosis to seat the heel properly, and if this does not resolve the problem, schedule an appointment with your orthotist for a fitting adjustment.

Extremely cold temperatures can cause the plastic to crack if it is suddenly stressed. Generally, the warmth of the patient's body inside the orthosis keeps the plastic at a warmer temperature and this is not a problem. Allow the orthosis to reach room temperature before spreading it open if it has been in an extremely cold environment like the car or garage in freezing temperatures.

Contact your orthotist if any of the straps need repair or replacement. The straps are an integral part of the fit and function of the orthosis.

## TC Flex Warranty

Orthomerica is dedicated to providing the best orthosis possible. The TC Flex Warranty covers the orthosis for 90 days beginning 14 days after the orthosis is shipped to the orthotist. The warranty covers fit, materials, and workmanship. Returns are coordinated through the orthotic facility and must be accompanied by a return authorization number on the outside of the box with explanation for the return on the enclosed paper work. Please contact your practitioner with any concerns so that any problems can be resolved quickly.

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