



# The Biomechanics of Ankle-Foot Orthoses

*Properly designed devices can positively affect gait.*

## Goals and Objectives

- 1) To provide an overview of the various mechanisms of action of ankle-foot orthoses on the lower extremity.
- 2) To compare the effects of solid versus articulated ankle-foot orthoses on the knee and midfoot joints.
- 3) To review research relevant to ankle braces and ankle-foot orthoses and their effects on balance and proprioception.
- 4) To provide evaluation, prescription and casting guidelines to optimize treatment outcomes with ankle-foot orthoses.

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Following this article, an answer sheet and full set of instructions are provided (p. 182).—**Editor**

By Douglas H. Richie Jr. DPM

## Introduction

Prior to 1995, the dispensing of ankle-foot orthoses (AFOs) by podiatric physicians was a rare occur-

rence. Despite the fact that podiatric medical education provided stellar training in lower extremity biomechanics and taught the pathomechanics of virtually every neuromuscular disease, treatment op-

tions utilized by podiatric physicians in the '70's thru '90's were limited to foot orthotic therapy and shoe modifications.

In 1995, a modified version of

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