

Using Your Walking (Bledsoe) Boot at Home

What is the purpose of a walking boot?

It is a foam lined brace with a rigid outer sole. It is used to protect and support your foot, ankle and lower leg by controlling alignment and reducing movement. Some common reasons for using the boot include, fractures, foot/leg injuries and Achille's tendon repair/injury.

It is designed to work in a similar way to a plaster cast by supporting the foot and ankle. The benefit, is that it can be removed to clean the skin on your foot or ankle.



How do I wear my walking boot?

The walking boot should be worn exactly as your doctor tells you. Some patients may wear the brace 24 hrs. a day. While others may only need to wear it when they are up and can remove it for showers and bed.

A sock should be worn under the boot to protect skin from sweat. It can get sweaty and should be changed throughout the day.

How do I walk in the boot?

The boot is made for weight bearing (putting weight on your foot) and walking. When you receive the brace, please follow your doctor's instructions. Find out whether you can weight bear or if the doctor would like non-weight bearing at first.

It may feel a little awkward or difficult to walk in the boot at first. This is because it has a rocker sole with no bend in the toe. As a result, you may feel slightly off balance. You may need to use a walker, cane or crutches until you have adjusted to it. Practice at home or with a physical therapist or hospital staff member before walking outside.

The heel height of the boot is slightly higher than a normal pair of running shoes. We suggest that you wear running shoes or something similar on the other foot. Try to keep your feet as evenly balanced as you can.

How do I plan for my trip home?

Arrange for someone to drive you home. You should not drive with the boot on. If driving is an issue, please talk to your doctor about removing it to drive.

How do I put on the walking boot?

It is very important to put on the boot properly. This will insure the proper stability and protection of the foot and ankle. The steps are below:

- Make sure your leg and foot are clean and dry.
- Put on a sock.
- Open all Velcro straps and foam liner on the calf and foot sections.

- Position your foot and leg inside the boot. Make sure the heel is down all the way to the back and bottom of the boot.
- Close the foam leg and foot liner over your leg.
- Fasten the Velcro straps starting with the (2) foot straps. The foot straps should be tight to hold heel in place.
- Fasten the Velcro calf straps, starting with the one above the ankle and moving upward.

How do I take off the walking boot?

To remove the boot, loosen all Velcro straps and open foam liner. Carefully remove your leg. Do not remove the liner from the external brace frame and sole.

How do I clean the walking boot?

Clean the liner of the walking boot if it gets soiled or dirty. It can be wiped down with a baby wipe.

If the liner needs to be removed, it is **very important** to put the uprights (side bars) in the same location when putting it back together.

- Place either tape or mark the liner on either side of the uprights with a felt tip pen.
- Remove the liner and hand wash with mild soap and rinse well.
- Let it air dry.
- Replace back into boot with the straps and uprights in same location as marked.

How long do I have to wear the walking boot?

Your doctor will decide how long you need to wear the walking boot. Please follow the doctor's instructions even if you feel better and would like to stop wearing it sooner. Your doctor will be checking your progress and will decide what is in your best long-term interest.

Things to Remember

You should inspect your skin under the brace daily to check for any breakdown. If you notice areas of breakdown, localized redness, or have any issues please call your doctor.

If you live out of the area, please call **1-800-323-8942** and ask for your clinic.

After hours, nights, weekends, and holidays, this will give you the paging operator. Ask for the resident on call for your clinic. Leave your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back.

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 9/2018 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#8040.