



Tips to Avoid Sores

With any device placed on a leg sores are a possibility. We do our best to predict where sores may pop up based on your pet's anatomy and then design the orthotic accordingly. However, with the unique gait of each breed and differences in anatomy some sores are hard to predict. Humans in orthotics or prosthetics can communicate if there is rubbing in an area before a sore pops up. However, with animals we may not detect an issue until a sore appears. This handout reviews sores and offers tips on how to prevent them.

1. There are Two Types of Sores:

- Friction sores: These sores arise from improper placement of the device or too much movement causing "chaffing." Friction sores start off with hair loss, then reddening of the skin, and if not addressed scratching or breaking of the skin. The sore tends to be a wide area. Friction sores can be addressed by ensuring proper placement and fit. They can also be addressed by adding more padding, adding a glide material to provide a smoother surface, or changing suspension.
- Pressure sores: These sores arise from the device itself. For example, the shell could be digging in. These sores are typically focal and often lead to breaking of the skin quickly. If any pressure sores arise please contact Walking Paws Rehab immediately. As the device may need to be heat flared and pushed out to relieve pressure on the area.

2. Tips to Avoid Sores:

- It is very important that you place the brace on at the right anatomical position. This will be reviewed at the fitting appointment.
- Remember to remove every strap when taking the brace off and strapping it back on itself.
- When placing the brace on remember to STRAP EVERY STRAP EVERY TIME. Do not get in the habit of leaving one strap attached and not redoing it. This over time will drive the brace in one direction, change the direction of forces, and can create a sore.
- Do the snug test to ensure the brace can not slide down. This will help you determine if the brace is on snug enough.
- The pads will move over time. Be sure that there is pad exposure above and below the strap. If the pad migrates up or down, then the strap could cut into the skin. Also ensure that the pad is centered on the brace. A pad migrating to the left or right can change the forces of the brace resulting in sores.
- Make sure dirt doesn't build up in the paw segment if your pet has one. The grit of dirt can cause friction sores.
- If your pet does have a paw segment be sure to keep the paw dry and clean. Moisture build up can cause skin infections.
- Keep the straps free of hair with a wired brush. Hair buildup causes the straps to lose their stickiness affecting suspension of the brace.
- If a strap starts to fray and doesn't have good adhesion the strap needs replace. Remember if the straps aren't adhering tightly the brace is unable to do its job.
- Please stick to the correct order of placing the straps on. At the fitting the order of straps are numbered. You can use a silver or bronze sharpie to remark the straps if the mark starts to wear.
- At the fitting we mark an estimated tightness to place the brace on with a sharpie. This mark will change over time based on changes in muscle mass.
- Be sure to check the screws to make sure the chafes (buckles) have not loosened and are rotating. Over time the screws may loosen and need retightened with an allen wrench.



- Would recommend taking a picture of your pet's brace when you first get it. That way you can remember where pads are suppose to go. Remember all straps have pads so if you see a strap without a pad we need to replace it. Straps without pads can cause sores.
- Some pads have a folded end. The side with the folded end should face the joint.
- Be sure when you are placing the brace on you are not causing a rotation.
- For stifle orthotics. Ensure the achilles (ankle strap) is staying above the back of the ankle (calcaneus). If the achilles strap slides down below the ankle this could cause a friction sore. Also ensure you are checking to make sure the fibular head is lining up with the bottom stifle screw. The brace should be centered on the leg and not sitting to far forward or backwards.
- Anti Monkey Butt Powder Helps with Friction Sores!

All of the above will be reviewed at the fitting appointment.