Pedorthic Terminology

A glossary prepared by the Pedorthic Association of Canada for Extended Health Benefits Providers and Third-Party Agencies. This glossary provides a list of terminology and definitions commonly used in pedorthic practice. Questions regarding specific products and services offered by a Canadian Certified Pedorthist – including items not listed here – should be discussed directly with the pedorthist.

Basic Terminology

**Cast**: a three-dimensional (volumetric) model designed to capture the specific contours of the plantar aspect of the foot. Acceptable casting techniques are foam box casting, plaster slipper casting, a casting sock, wax slipper casting, contact digitizing and optical/laser scanning. A two-dimensional footprint from a pedograph or pressure sensitive mat does not qualify as a cast.

**Custom-made**: the term is reserved to define a product fabricated from a three-dimensional model of the foot which capture bony alignment and shape and is manufactured from raw materials. A device must be fabricated from a “cast” and footwear must be fabricated from a “last” unique to the patient to qualify as custom-made.

**Direct-moulded (non-casted)**: refers to a device moulded directly to the foot from raw materials that are warmed until soft. This device can be further modified and used to provide cushioning, pressure relief, redistribute load and accommodate deformity (a self-moulded product is not considered direct moulded).

**Gait analysis**: the observation of the entire body with a focus on lower extremity to determine deviations in alignment, movement patterns, and symmetry during walking. This may be done visually or through video recording.

**Last**: a three-dimensional (volumetric) model designed to capture the specific contours of the entire foot. Acceptable techniques are plaster casting, casting sock and optical/laser scanner. A two-dimensional footprint, foam cast, slipper cast or contact digitizing are not acceptable techniques.

**Modified**: a mass-produced pre-fabricated/over-the-counter device that has been altered by the addition or deletion of material in order to modify movement or accommodate pain or dysfunction.

**Pedorthic assessment**: the assessment of lower limb bony alignment, posture, movement patterns, general function of the foot, and the interaction of the foot with the rest of the body. Typically a Pedorthic Assessment includes a history taking, postural analysis, musculoskeletal examination, functional testing, gait analysis, and footwear consultation.

**Pre-fabricated OTC (over-the-counter) or stock**: refers to mass produced devices and footwear that are not unique to the patient.

**Self-moulded**: refers to a mass produced pre-fabricated/over the counter device that can be heated and moulded directly to the foot.

Products Provided

**Custom foot orthoses (orthotics)**: an internal foot appliance which is manufactured from a three-dimensional image of the foot, and made from raw materials. A custom foot orthotic can accommodate bony deformities, and/or modify the movement pattern of the foot and lower limb.

**Custom-made footwear**: footwear that is manufactured from a three-dimensional mould of the foot and ankle, and made of raw materials. Custom made footwear is specifically designed for each and every individual. It is usually needed when stock footwear will not fit due to deformity, or will not suit the client due to significant dysfunction.
**Glossary**

**Custom-made toe splint:** a device manufactured from a raw material (typically a silicon-like material) designed to re-align, separate or support a deformed or deviated toe or toes.

**Specialty Footwear/Braces/Splints**

**Arch brace:** off-the-shelf device designed to support the medial longitudinal arch or metatarsal of the foot. Often used to replace taping or strapping. It can be useful for clients not needing custom made devices, or unable to wear footwear for specific activities.

**Forefoot relief shoe:** single footwear device which decreases or eliminates external pressure to the plantar surface of the forefoot. Useful as a post-operative choice following forefoot surgery or as a device to protect an ulcerated area of the forefoot.

**Overboot:** footwear designed to cover shoes, boots and sandals to protect them from the elements; may also include insulating properties. These products allow the client to continue their use of specific footwear and orthotic devices during inclement weather.

**Plantar fasciitis (dorsiflexion) night splint:** off-the-shelf brace, fit for the client and designed to maintain the ankle and forefoot in a dorsiflexed position during sleeping. It is useful in treatment of plantar fasciitis, Achilles tendonitis, and a number of other diagnoses involving the range of motion of the ankle. Can also be custom made as per prescription.

**Post-op shoe(s):** footwear designed to accommodate swelling, dressings and possible hardware present following an operative procedure. Typically sold as a single shoe, post-op shoes may also be used as a pair following bilateral surgery. May also be used to help establish equal heel heights when regular footwear cannot be worn.

**Rear foot relief shoe:** single footwear device which decreases or eliminates external pressure to the plantar surface of the rear foot. Useful as a post-operative choice following rear foot surgery or as a device to protect an ulcerated area of the rear foot.

**Rocker-soled walking brace:** a walking boot designed to treat ankle and foot disorders resulting from a systemic disease or injury, as well as after surgery.

**Toe alignment splint:** off-the-shelf device designed to re-align the great and lesser toes. Useful in treatment of flexible deformities of the toes such as hammer toes, mallet toes, claw toes, bunions, and over-crossing toes.

Toe splints/pads/cushions: off-the-shelf devices designed to cushion, align or accommodate bony deformities. These items are often used to stave off surgical intervention.

**Stockings, Hosiery, and Specialty Socks**

**Gel socks:** hosiery containing a layer of silicon-like material on the bottom side. Often prescribed and used by individuals with diabetes, various forms of arthritis, and fat pad degeneration.

**Medical compression stockings:** the basic treatment for chronic venous insufficiency and lymphedema. Treatment of venous problems depends on the severity of the condition. The greater the severity, the higher the prescribed compression. Compression is graduated, strongest at the ankle with decreasing compression up the leg. This design compresses dilated veins to help move blood up the legs and back to the heart. If swelling of the foot and lower leg is not controlled, the fit of a shoe is compromised and could lead to additional complications.

**Seamless socks:** hosiery that contains no seams exposed to the skin. Often prescribed and used by individuals with Diabetes, various forms of arthritis, and dermatological conditions.