

**custom devices**

# Know Your ABCs

The American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics, and Pedorthics makes certain that practitioners with their ABC certification are specifically educated and trained to make and fit orthoses and prostheses and manage comprehensive orthotic and/or prosthetic patient care. "Comprehensive" means they augment patient care with design and fabrication of orthoses and prostheses specifically for their patients' needs. Certified practitioners have the unique expertise to assess, design, and fabricate devices to give their patients increased mobility and independence.

The certified prosthetist, certified orthotist, and certified pedorthist must complete a residency in their field after completing their master's degree program. Then, they must pass certifications exams. They are serious and dedicated to the profession they have chosen.



American Board for Certification in  
Orthotics, Prosthetics & Pedorthics



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## Why go to a certified pedorthist?

It might be obvious for an amputee to go to a certified prosthetist when needing a prosthetic, but why go to a certified pedorthist for a shoe insert? You may walk into a drug store and see a large assortment of insoles and, based on what each one claims, you pick one which you believe is exactly what you need. But is it? Some of these off-the-shelf shoe orthotics may not serve your individual need. Foot, ankle, knee, and hip biomechanics are an extremely complex area. Gait analysis is part of the certified pedorthist's thorough exam. You are not identical to others in the movements and stress points of your body. You probably don't wear the same shoes all day, every day. You walk different distances on different surfaces. People have different heights and weights. Your pedorthic needs are complex.

A certified pedorthist has specialized training and education in the therapeutic use of footwear to correct or prevent deformities, maintain mobility, and treat problems caused by disease or injury. The difference between a pedorthist and a podiatrist is clear. Podiatrists diagnose and treat foot and ankle problems; it may involve prescribing orthotics. A certified pedorthist makes and fits orthotics based on an exam and analysis of the patient's biomechanics.

## Why go to a certified orthotist?

Most people think orthotics are something you wear in your shoes. Orthotics are much more than that. Merriam-Webster defines an orthotic as *"a device (such as a brace or splint) for supporting, immobilizing, or treating muscles, joints, or skeletal parts which are weak, ineffective, deformed, or injured."* This would include foot (ped) orthotics but also braces, AFOs (ankle-foot orthotics), and KAFOs (knee-ankle-foot orthotics). You can buy a knee brace off the shelf, but a certified orthotist would determine which device would help you based on your gait, your medical need (working with your medical doctor or orthopedist), your activity, function, and mobility levels and then customize it to your measurements and comfort.

A certified orthotist is trained to provide an orthotic to fit your personal physical need – to control, guide, limit, and/or immobilize an extremity or joint, to assist movement, reduce weight bearing forces, aid rehabilitation from fractures, and to otherwise correct the shape and/or function of the body, providing easier movement capability or reduce pain. So, if off-the-shelf devices aren't helping you, visit a certified orthotist or pedorthist. Take care of yourself ... you are unique!

Sunshine Prosthetics and Orthotics is located at 1700 Route 23 North, Suite 180, in Wayne, NJ 07470. Call 973-696-8100 to learn more about their services, or visit their website at **[www.SunshinePando.com](http://www.SunshinePando.com)**