



Caring for your prosthesis
and your residual limb

THE
LONDON PROSTHETIC
CENTRE

Follow Up Care

It is important to allow your residual limb to adapt to your new prosthesis. A gradual increase in your wearing time can make the difference between a comfortable and painful transition. Your residual limb volume may reduce during the first few weeks of wearing a new prosthesis, especially if this is your first prosthesis.

- With your eyes and your hands (especially if you have altered sensation from a neuropathy, poor circulation, or diabetes) to avoid blisters and skin damage.

If your skin is broken, do not wear the prosthesis until you have seen your prosthetist. Many prosthetic users also find it necessary to add or change socks throughout the day. It is normal to accommodate the constant changes of volumes in the residual limb. If using a silicone liner, make sure this is cleaned daily and dry before it is worn against your skin.

Prosthesis Care

Your socket should be wiped out regularly with a damp cloth and allowed to dry thoroughly. Never use direct heat to dry the socket. Your prosthesis will, like all things mechanical, require maintenance from time to time. If you notice your prosthesis becoming noisy, difficult to use or ill-fitting, please contact your prosthetist. Never try to repair it yourself.

- Do not use oil or any other lubricant on your prosthesis
- Do not loosen any screws or bolts as this may be dangerous
- Do not try to modify your socket in any way.

The importance of a correct fitting prosthesis to the health, comfort and gait of the amputee cannot be exaggerated.

What if the prosthesis doesn't fit correctly?

Follow-up is as important as the initial fitting. You will need to make several visits for adjustments with the prosthetist as well as training with a therapist. They can help you ease pressure areas, adjust alignment, work out any problems, and regain the skills you need to adapt to life after limb loss. Tell your prosthetist if the prosthesis is uncomfortable, too loose or too tight, or causing any skin issues such as blisters. Ask questions about things you need or want to do. Communicate honestly about your needs. The more you communicate with your prosthetist and therapist, the better you will be able to succeed with a prosthesis.

How long will my prosthesis last?

Depending on your age, activity level and growth, the prosthesis can last anywhere from several months to several years. In the early stages after limb loss, many changes occur in the residual limb that can lead to shrinking of the limb. The greatest amount of volume loss occurs within the first six months following amputation. This may require socket changes, the addition of socks, or changes in the alignment and/or replacement of the socket. Later on, increased activity level and desire for additional function can necessitate a change in the prosthetic or its parts. Once the prosthesis is comfortably adjusted and you are functioning at the desired level of activity, the prosthesis needs only minor repairs or maintenance and can last for an average of three years.

Residual Limb Care

Examination and care of your residual limb should become part of your daily routine.

- You should wash your residual limb daily with warm water and non-perfumed soap. You may have to do this more often if your skin perspires in warm weather.
- Always ensure your skin is completely dry after washing. A moisturising cream should be used if your skin is very dry before bedtime or when you are not wearing your prosthesis.
- Avoid oils and talcum powder unless they have been prescribed by a doctor as they may lead to irritation and skin damage.
- Check your residual limb every day for signs of chafing, pressure points, excess reddening, blisters and cracks in the skin or other skin disorders. A mirror may help you to check your skin, especially at the back.



If you regularly take baths, do not leave your residual limb submerged in water for long periods of time because the water will soften the skin on the residual limb, making it more vulnerable to injury. The size of the residual limb may change as swelling goes down, meaning the number of socks you need to use may vary. Make sure you change the socks every day to maintain a hygienic environment. If you think you may be developing a skin infection, contact your prosthetist or GP for advice.



Customised
exclusively for you

be unique, be true,
be yourself!

Socks and liners care

You will receive several socks with your prosthesis. With this supply of socks, you will be able to better manage your fit. Every time you put on the prosthesis, it is important that you are aware of how many socks you have on. If the socket is loose and your limb slides in too easily, you need to add a (thin, thick or half half) sock; if the socket is feeling tight then reduce your fit by a sock.

This process may need to be repeated throughout the day as your limb will change in volume. It is ideal to have the best fit possible with the least amount of socks. Understanding prosthetic sock management is key to avoiding skin breakdown and irritation. With the proper fit and follow-up the chances of having a healthier residuum will increase.



Rehabilitation Care

To help develop greater independence, improved mobility and increased activity, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and psychological counselling is vital. Therapist will perform home or clinic evaluations and design a specific therapy program that will meet your needs. They will also address concerns such as returning to work, personal life, school and leisure activities.

Our Aim

Our aim is to give you as much advice and information to help you along your journey and we hope you find the information useful.

If you have any queries or concerns about your prosthesis or for more information contact us at 020 8789 6565 or 077526 86439, email: enquiries@thelondonprosthetics.com



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