

A PRACTICAL

Guide

FOR AMPUTEES





We empower amputees with knowledge and support to make a real difference, because no one should have to go through limb loss alone.

Limbs 4 Life would like to acknowledge and thank the peer support volunteers, our members and the healthcare providers who generously contributed to this publication.

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Introduction

In Australia people face the challenges associated with limb loss every day. In fact, every 30 minutes someone loses a limb in our country. Some people lose limbs due to disease like diabetes, infection or cancer, while other people face limb loss as a result of accidents. In addition, some children are born with limb differences. Regardless of the cause, losing a limb or limbs, is life changing for everyone.

This resource has been developed to provide you with some practical information and to help guide you through the journey ahead. We hope you find this Guide useful and that you are encouraged to ask questions, seek answers and find the right support to suit your needs.

At Limbs 4 Life we believe that people facing limb loss and those who care for them, should have access to an organisation that understands your circumstances and can provide connections with others in a similar situation. Our goal is to provide you with up to date information when you need it the most.



Limbs 4 Life is an independent non-government organisation and the peak body for amputees in Australia. Limbs 4 Life supports thousands of amputees and their families each year. Without Limbs 4 Life many amputees and children born with limb differences would go through the trauma of limb loss alone.

As a registered charity, Limbs 4 Life relies on your donations to achieve our mission.

Hearing the news



Learning that you are facing an amputation can be a frightening prospect. Coming to terms with the thought of surgery is not always easy and can lead to many questions. Spending time in hospital is usually stressful for everyone.



To assist with your preparation for surgery, try to access as much information as you need so that you can understand what lies ahead of you. Make a list, and write down any questions or concerns you have. Arrange a time to discuss these questions or concerns with your doctor or healthcare provider.

It can sometimes be helpful to take a family member or friend to medical appointments with you for support. Friends and family members can help you by taking notes during these appointments especially if you're concerned that you may not remember all the information you are given.

They can also ask questions on your behalf.

Some recommendations prior to surgery may include:

- Visiting a rehabilitation centre to find out what services they provide
- Speaking to a prosthetist or physiotherapist about your mobility and/or functional outcomes
- Speaking to a rehabilitation consultant (doctor) about your recovery process, your 'treatment care plan' and what will happen after surgery
- Requesting to meet another amputee (peer support volunteer)

- Speaking to your doctor about pre-surgical therapy and what you can do in the lead up to your operation

If your treatment care plan includes sending you for rehabilitation after your surgery, ask about the programs and services that the rehabilitation facility have in place. If you are not going to be admitted to a rehabilitation facility, find out where you will be going and what supports will be available for you.



After surgery, some people may complete the healing process at home. 'Hospital in the Home' (HITH) or 'Rehabilitation in the Home' (RITH) are both services which are comparable to what you would receive in hospital.

These services provide access to a range of healthcare staff who will assist with your recovery. Options will vary depending on where you live.

TIP



Get your copy of the Amputee Checklist prior to leaving rehabilitation.

The decision to amputate

Whether your amputation is due to disease, infection, cancer or trauma; the opportunity to save a limb is not always possible. For some people, the choice to undergo an amputation is completely out of their hands. While for others, the decision to amputate can be a very difficult decision to make, and it is normal to fear the outcome.

The decision to have an amputation to achieve a better outcome, especially if the limb is compromised by a birth deficiency or as a result of failed surgeries and long-term pain, can be the best decision you will make in your lifetime.

Many people are able to regain their physical function with the use of a prosthesis or mobility device, and get back to the things that they used to enjoy, without the pain that they were once experiencing.

At this time, people usually have questions. These questions may include:

- How will I manage day to day tasks?
- How will I look after myself?
- Will I be able to regain my independence?
- Will a prosthesis give me quality of life?
- Will I be able to do the things I used to do?
- Will I still experience pain?
- How different will my life become?

It is normal to seek answers to the questions you have. Ask as many questions as you need to, and access as much information as you can. After all, the more equipped you are with information, the more confidence you will have over decisions in your future.

Becoming an amputee is a life changing experience for each individual. This does not have to mean the end, just a new beginning and a time to learn different and new ways of doing things.

Adjusting to limb loss

Everyone reacts differently to the loss of a limb/s. Limb loss can leave you feeling anxious, vulnerable and uncertain about the future. Your body has experienced a significant change. It is important to remember that your ability to adapt to these changes will become easier over time. Some common difficulties that you may experience include:

- The ability to complete everyday tasks
- A change to your level of independence
- A difference in your mobility/functionality
- Concerns with your body image and sexuality
- General everyday changes to your lifestyle

It is completely normal to feel strong emotions. Some people grieve for their loss. You may be feeling scared, angry, frustrated and even sad. Working through your feelings may take time.

Remember, you don't have to go through this experience alone. Support is available. Make sure you ask for assistance if you need it, whether it's at the beginning of your journey, several months later, or years down the track.





Emotional health and wellbeing

Your emotional health and mental well-being is as equally as important as your physical health. If you are having trouble coping with your emotions there are a number of areas of support that you can tap into:

- Get involved with a Peer Support Program. Being with others who share a similar experience can help to reduce feelings of isolation. Peer volunteers understand how you are feeling and can help you to adjust to changes in your day-to-day life.
- Join a local support group. Amputee support groups provide a friendly and comfortable environment to share experiences with one-another.
- If you don't wish to meet with a peer face to face, take part in an online discussion group. Online groups can provide connections to the wider community.

- Seek professional help. If you are experiencing depression, anxiety, anger, denial or grief following your amputation it is important to talk to a member of your healthcare team or your local doctor. You may like to speak to a trained counsellor to help you deal with your emotions. Your doctor can assist you with a care plan or refer you to a professional. These visits can be subsidised via Medicare.

Talk to the people in your life about how you are feeling. Stay connected to your friends. Share your thoughts with others as this will help you deal with the changes of how your body looks and feels.

Support can be accessed through:

Lifeline - Crisis Support 13 11 14

SANE Helpline 1800 18 7263

Beyond blue - 1300 22 46 36

or a mental health support organisation in your community.

The benefits of a peer support network



"Peer support gave me hope. Just knowing that there are others like me, helped to reduce my fears". *Rodney 58 years below knee amputee*



Peer support is an important part of the recovery and rehabilitation process. Early on in your journey to recovery you may experience uncertainty, have doubts and questions. Peer volunteers can help to ease the burden and provide support along the way. Receiving a visit from a Peer can be a rewarding experience and a wonderful way to gain insight to your new situation.

Peer Support Volunteers are amputees like you; they are people who have experienced and lived with limb loss for a number of years. They have successfully adapted to their amputation, re-engaged with their community, and live independently.

Building a network of peers will enable you to share your own very personal experiences with people who understand. Peer networks can provide practical and emotional support in a group setting which will enable you to be listened to, and heard. It may help you to develop confidence and feel more secure about your situation. Peer networks can be wonderful sources of information; they can give you tips, share hard earned knowledge and help to guide you to services and activities in your own community.

A Peer may be able to answer some of the many questions you may have about

day to day activities; this may include using a prosthesis, using a wheelchair, driving a modified car, sport/s and community activities, along with addressing concerns of a personal and private nature.

Accessing supports

There are a number of ways you can access amputee peer support through Limbs 4 Life. Often the volunteer you are matched with will; be someone of a similar age, have lost their



limb for the same reason, have the same level of amputation and in most cases be someone who is the same gender. Peers can visit you in hospital, the rehabilitation facility and/or in a public location. All you need to do is contact us to request a visit or alternatively ask one of your family or your healthcare team members to arrange a visit on your behalf.

Face to face support will enable you to meet with a peer volunteer, prior to or following surgery.

Phone support can be provided to anyone at any time. If you would like to speak to a volunteer you can contact Limbs 4 Life and we will match you to a volunteer who will contact you, at a time that suits you.

Virtual support is for those of you who would prefer to chat to someone online. You can join the conversation in our Facebook group. You can post questions or simply share your experience in a safe and friendly environment, or you can sit back and read comments from other people. Visit '**Amputees - Limbs 4 Life.**'

Group support

There are a number of support groups operating throughout different states and territories of Australia. Some groups meet on a monthly basis, while others meet less frequently. Some meet for lunch, while others have their meetings around a particular activity. If you would like information about groups in your area contact us directly.



"Meeting other amputees really helped my husband. It also made a big difference to me. I had no idea what to expect and what our lives would be like after he lost his leg. The support and information was wonderful."

Leanne wife to Graeme 61 years below knee amputee

TIP



You might like to use the **Amputee Diary** to write down questions, keep a record of your achievements and list your goals. Ask your healthcare provider for a copy today.

We're here for you!

Speaking with other amputees can sometimes be helpful. Asking questions about limb loss that only another person who has lived with limb loss understands can give you hope and can help you realise what is possible.

Limbs 4 Life have trained volunteers across Australia who are willing to listen. Why not contact us today and ask to chat to one of our volunteers.

Call us today 1300 78 2231 or email info@limbs4life.org.au

Connect with the community online via Facebook at Amputees - Limbs 4 Life Australia



Amputation

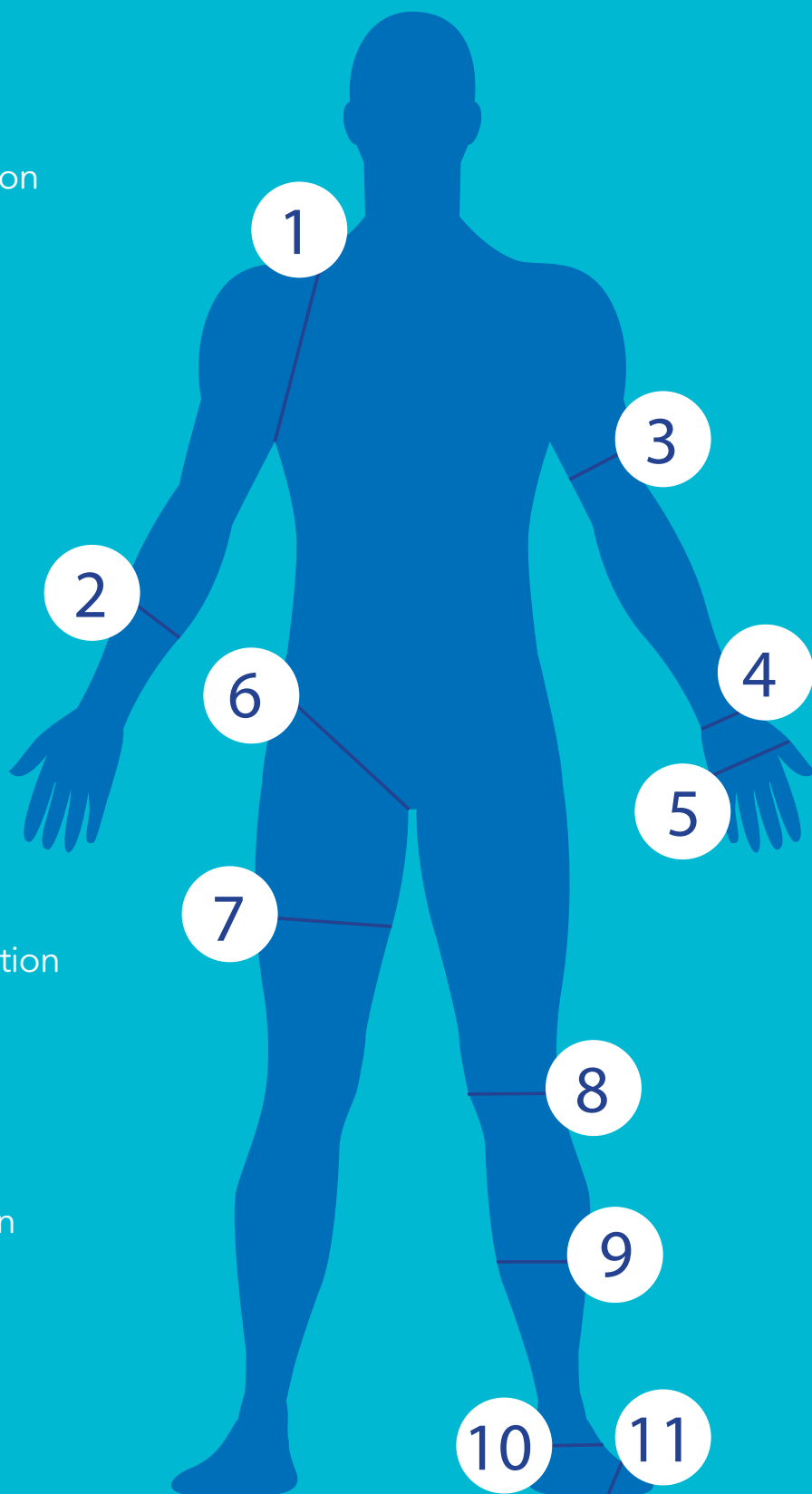


Amputation is a life changing event. It takes time to recover physically and mentally.

Sites of amputation

Common terms

1. **Shoulder**
Shoulder disarticulation
2. **Below Elbow**
Transradial
3. **Above Elbow**
Transhumeral
4. **Through Wrist**
Wrist disarticulation
5. **Partial Hand**
Transmetacarpal
6. **Hipdisartic**
Hip disarticulation
7. **Above Knee**
Transfemoral amputation
8. **Thru Knee**
Knee disarticulation
9. **Below Knee**
Transtibial amputation
10. **Symes**
11. **Partial Foot**



The surgery

For most people, the purpose of amputation surgery is to remove the infection or disease to enable the limb to be healthy. At the same time, and where possible, surgeons try to save as much of the limb so that it may be possible for an artificial limb (prosthesis) to be fitted.

After the surgery

Each hospital will have a different system in place for managing your residual (stump) limb care after surgery. It is very important that stump bandaging and wound dressing is done correctly. This applies to both upper and lower limb amputees. It is normal (following surgery) for stump bandaging to be checked and (in some cases) re-applied up to two or three times per day. The purpose of re-bandaging is to ensure that the dressing is firm but not tight and that it stays in position to effectively manage swelling without causing any discomfort in the limb.

Pain

Pain in the area of the wound is common following any operation, especially as you start to move around and the tissue starts to heal. This pain should improve during the first few weeks and will usually require some medication in the short term.

TIP



If you suddenly experience new pain that does not settle down with your current treatment notify the healthcare team immediately. It is best to be sure that there are no underlying problems, for example your bandages or dressings being too tight.

Movement therapy

Following any lengthy stay in bed your muscles and joints can start to become weak and stiff. As you begin to recover from surgery, hospital staff (usually the physiotherapist) will help you to regain some mobility. If you are a:

lower limb amputee

- the staff may arrange a wheelchair for you so that you can begin to move around.

upper limb amputee

- the physiotherapist will assess your balance and leg strength and start you walking with or without appropriate supports.

upper and lower limb amputees

- it is important to maintain your flexibility and strength in the joints above the level of your amputation and your therapists will assist you with this.



Removable Rigid Dressings

If you have had an amputation below the knee you will (most likely) be fitted with what is commonly called a Removable Rigid Dressing (RRD). This dressing fits comfortably over the top of the stump bandages and/or stump socks. The purpose of this hard-cased dressing (which looks similar to a helmet) is to protect the wound and prevent increased swelling.

A RRD should provide protection if you have a fall, bump or knock your residual limb (stump). Once fitted with a RRD it is important to wear it for all transfers in and out of bed and any time you are using crutches, a wheelchair or moving around.

RRD's are usually tailor-made to suit each individual. In most cases, hospitals will engage the services of a prosthetist to manufacture this for you.

In the early stages following an amputation, below knee amputees can be more prone to swelling in the stump if the knee is bent for long periods of time. This can lead to shortening of the muscles (also known as contractures), increased pain and reduced movement in the knee joint.

During the beginning of your recovery it is important not to hang your leg over the side of the bed, or over the edge of your seat/ wheelchair for more than a few minutes at a time, and/or when transferring, showering or doing your exercise programs. Make sure you use a suitable stump support at all other times.

Upper limb amputees may have the limb bandaged or fitted with a light compression garment to control any swelling. For below elbow amputees, it is important to maintain good movement at your elbow and shoulder level.



TIP



After amputation it is not unusual for you to feel like your leg or arm is still there. Take care when getting up out of bed, and think about what it is that you are going to do, prior to doing it.

AeroFit®

Breathable Innovation for Thriving Skin

AeroFit® helps keep your limb feeling drier and more comfortable by reducing humidity inside the socket. The 3D-printed Seal-In liner works with a vented socket to promote airflow and support healthier-feeling skin throughout the day.

Paired with the Navii® microprocessor knee and the Pro-Flex® Terra foot, the AeroFit® system supports comfort, stability and confidence for everyday activity.



AeroFit®
go.ossur.com/Aerofitanz

Navii®
go.ossur.com/naviianz

Pro-Flex® Terra
go.ossur.com/terraanz



The early stages of recovery



The pathway to your recovery can vary depending on where you live. The length of your recovery time may depend on the cause of your amputation together with other physical factors, your medical condition and your general health.

Acute hospital

Discharge destinations

- ⇒ Rehabilitation facility
- ⇒ In/outpatient rehabilitation
- ⇒ Hospital/rehab in the home
- ⇒ Supported care facility

The news that you are ready to begin the rehabilitation phase of your recovery is a positive sign. Whichever pathway your journey may take, it means that you are well enough to move on and progress with the next phase of your recovery.

Everybody's recovery journey is different and can follow a different treatment pathway. When we talk about treatment pathways we mean: the people involved in your care, the people that will help you along the way, how you will be cared for, what supports you will receive and where your discharge destination will be.

Who is involved in your care?

The amputee rehabilitation and recovery process is different for everyone, and can vary between facilities, states and territories. There may be a number of different healthcare team members involved in your care. Your healthcare team will work with you to help you to regain your independence and increase your confidence and help you to develop and achieve your goals. It is important to have recovery goals.

You should discuss your goals with your healthcare team and work with your team to develop a plan for your recovery.

The healthcare team who may be involved in your care can include:

Rehabilitation Consultant (doctor) - oversees to ensure that your health and medical needs are being met. Your doctor together with your team will assess if you are fit and able to use a mechanical/assistive device, such as a prosthesis.

Occupational Therapist - helps you to adjust to day to day activities, like personal care, domestic tasks such as: meal preparation, accessing your place of residence, education or work readiness. If you are an upper limb amputee the Occupational Therapist will assist you with the functional training of your prosthesis.

TIP



There is no such thing as a silly question! If you don't understand something or need more information, ASK! Your healthcare team is there to support you.

Physiotherapist - will design an exercise program tailored to your needs. They will assist you to regain your balance, flexibility, strength and stamina. They will help you to use mobility aids such as: wheelchairs, walking frames, crutches and other assistive devices suitable for you. If you are a lower limb amputee they will assist you to use a prosthesis.

Prosthetist - will look after the design, manufacture, supply and fit of the prosthesis. Together, you will discuss and decide on the prosthetic components to suit your needs and lifestyle. They will also teach you how to 'donn and doff' (put on and take off) your prosthesis, and start your prosthetic training.

Social Worker - will provide confidential counselling assistance for you and your family. They can assist you with emotional support. Social workers will provide assistance with financial matters (e.g Centrelink), transport, disabled parking permits, multi-purpose taxi cards and your accommodation requirements.

Nursing team - assist you with medications, personal hygiene like bathing and dressing and any wound care and diabetic management that is required. They will liaise with your healthcare team about your specific needs or any referrals you may require.

"Taking part in regular exercise, feeling stronger and fitter helped me to feel more confident about starting my prosthetic training."

Peter 62 years above knee amputee

TIP



Maintaining a healthy attitude and good exercise program can help YOU to achieve better outcomes and your goals.



YOU

The most important member of your recovery team is YOU. From the onset, you will be encouraged to play an active role in your recovery and care.

Depending on the reason for your amputation, other healthcare staff involved in your care may include:

- **Diabetic educator**
- **Dietician**
- **Exercise physiologist**
- **Podiatrist**
- **Psychologist**
- **Sexual health counsellor**

Managing pain



Everyone's experience of pain is different. Some pain is worse than other pain. Unique to some amputees is phantom pain and/or phantom sensation – pain or feelings in the limb that is no longer there.

Phantom sensation

Phantom sensation is a feeling in the limb which is absent. Some people feel like their limb is still there, even after surgery. This is normal. You may have feelings or sensations in parts of the limb such as: the toes or the fingers, the shin, elbow or even the knee which have been amputated. You may experience sensations such as: pins and needles, an itch or tingling sensations.

Phantom sensation is common following amputation. One theory to explain this is that the brain has developed a recorded image of the limb and when normal messages from the limb are lost (due to amputation) the brain attempts to reconstruct an image of the limb, and send messages; hence phantom sensation.

The good news is that the brain has an amazing way to re-learn, and this is helped by increasing normal input, for example; moving, touching or best of all, using the residual limb (with the help of a prosthesis) to enable a 'new image' of the limb to be created in the brain.

If you do experience phantom sensation, take care. Many lower limb amputees report trips and falls especially during the night. It is easy to think that your limb is still there and when you're feeling sleepy, or when it's dark, you may try to use it. (For example: getting out of bed during the night (like you did before) to go to the toilet.

To prevent falls in the early stages following amputation, it's important that you concentrate when moving from your bed to a wheelchair. If you don't feel confident moving or transferring, ask for help.

Phantom pain

Phantom pain sometimes occurs in the weeks following amputation and, like phantom sensation, can reduce over time. Some people find this pain very uncomfortable. It can be similar to a shooting or sharp pain, cramp, burning or feel like a mild electric shock. Phantom pain can usually be managed by a variety of treatments and medication. If you experience phantom pain speak to your healthcare team so that they can work with you

to decide which pain management solution will work best for you.

Phantom pain may return on occasions, for example: when you are unwell, over tired, feeling 'stressed' if your prosthesis is not fitting correctly and if there are problems with your residual limb (stump). Some amputees experience more pain due to a change in weather conditions and surrounding environments.

Reducing the pain

One of the successful ways to manage phantom pain is diversion therapy. Diversion therapy is when you try to focus your attention on doing something different. Such as: moving if you have been sitting still for a while, or touching and massaging your residual limb. Some people use things like: listening to music, talking to a friend or playing a game, to help take their mind off the pain. Basically anything that takes the focus of your mind away from the phantom pain can be a useful way for the pain to stop.

The use of other therapies can be helpful, these can include: massage or stretching and mirror therapy. Other people are comforted by the use of heat or cold packs; (these should only be used if you can feel hot or cold sensations well).

Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS) machines generate electrical impulses through the skin surface that are transmitted to the spinal cord and brain. These different messages from your residual limb (stump) can create a diversion and therefore disrupt and reduce the pain. It is always recommended to speak with your healthcare team to discuss the use of other treatments for phantom pain to make sure you are using a method that is safe for you.



If you are experiencing phantom pain, ask your healthcare team to assist you with techniques to help you to manage the pain.

Developing good habits



Losing a limb/s will impact the balance of your body. Whether you are an upper or lower limb amputee, the best thing that you can do is to make every effort to have good posture and (and if you are using a prosthesis) a good gait (walking) pattern from early on. Your physiotherapist will help you to develop these skills initially; however it's up to you to keep up the good habits you learn.



If you are a lower limb non-prosthetic user it is important that the seating and back support on your wheelchair provides and promotes a good sitting posture. The seating/cushion needs to be comfortable and give you suitable pressure relief to prevent skin problems.

You should also be aware of the impact that the use of assistive devices such as: walking frames, crutches and walking sticks can have on the rest of your body; especially the arms, hands, shoulders and upper back area.

Gait = a person's manner of walking

Posture = a particular position of the body

On-going complications

For those of you with a single-side amputation, it will be normal to put more stress through the non-amputated side of your body. People often do this to make up for their missing limb especially in the early stages of prosthetic training. This can be due to the lack of confidence and inexperience using a prosthesis. This additional stress can lead to long term health problems and can sometimes cause unnecessary pain.

Where possible, it is necessary to make sure that you practice the good habits that you have been taught by your healthcare team.

Lower limb amputees need to be mindful of good gait patterns, and develop strength in the legs and trunk (stomach and back) muscles to assist with walking. This will support your ability to do everyday activities and help to prevent injuries.

People living with **upper limb amputations**, (whether they are using a prosthesis or not), need to take care of their neck, upper back and shoulder areas to prevent long term pain. Flexibility of the neck and upper back, along with neck and shoulder-blade control exercises will be very important in the long term.

TIP



If you are experiencing pain of any kind, speak up and seek medical advice.

Sockets and socket fit

The prosthetic socket is the device that connects your residual limb (stump) to the prosthesis. The socket is custom made just for you.

The prosthetic socket usually consists of a hard outer wall which forms the connection to other components such as knee joints and feet and. Similarly, the socket for upper limb amputees forms a connection to components such as an elbow or wrist joint and hand. A liner or sock usually covers your limb to protect the skin and acts as an interface between your skin and the socket. A liner also works to minimise friction and rubbing between skin and the socket.

Prior to having your prosthetic socket fitted, your prosthetist will often make what is called a check (test) socket; a clear see-through plastic socket which enables the prosthetist to see any pressure areas or redness.

A check socket can easily be changed (modified) to suit your shape and comfort if required. You can make changes to the check socket while you are trialling it to make sure that the fit is more comfortable for you.

It is not unusual for sockets to feel strange at first, after all you have nothing to compare it to. It takes time to get used to taking pressure through a different surface of your body when standing and walking, for example: the front of your knee, or mid-thigh.

In the early stages wearing a prosthesis may cause some discomfort and redness to the skin. However, this should not be the case in the long term. If your prosthesis is uncomfortable you need to do something about it and raise your concerns with your prosthetist.

For a prosthesis to work well it is important that the socket is a 'good' fit. In fact, it is hard to think of anything else you might wear that has to fit as well, and for as long, as the socket of a prosthesis.





PROTEOR

QUATTRO 2TM

MICROPROCESSOR KNEE

Available Worldwide September 1, 2026

Not just an upgrade. Next-level features, designed for you.

QUATTRO 2 doesn't just sense your movement... it adapts in real time. Everything that made the original legendary—now stronger, smarter, and more capable, with movement possibilities unique to QUATTRO 2.

WHAT'S NEW WITH 2 | 10x FASTER PROCESSOR | STAIR ASCENT | 150 kg WEIGHT LIMIT | IP68 RATING | 2-3 DAY BATTERY | USB-C



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For more information, contact our Prosthetics Team or visit [opchealth.com.au](https://www.opchealth.com.au)

How your prosthesis is made



Prosthetics come in a range of shapes and sizes and are custom fit for each individual.

How your prosthesis is made



Step 1.

Your prosthetist will take measurements of your residual limb



Step 2.

Plaster is wrapped around your limb to make a cast



Step 3.

A cast is then made of your limb



Step 4.

A lamination process is used to create the hard shell known as the socket



Step 5.

The socket is then attached to a pylon and foot or in the case of upper limbs - the prosthetic component



Step 6.

Then the prosthesis is fitted to your limb and adjusted to your needs

The Importance of a good socket fit

A poorly fitting socket in **LOWER limb** amputees can;

- cause skin breakdowns or blisters and ulcers,
- affect your ability to walk well,
- impact your balance and confidence
- contribute to falls, and;
- be uncomfortable and painful to wear.

A poorly fitting socket in **UPPER limb** amputees can;

- cause skin breakdowns and irritations, and;
- impact your ability to successfully use the prosthesis.

So how do you manage to keep a good fit between something that changes (your body) and something that doesn't (your socket)?

You do it in two ways. Firstly, by trying to minimise changes in your stump. This includes; maintaining your diet and regular exercise; and, secondly by constantly reviewing how you feel in your prosthesis, checking the skin and contacting your prosthetist if you notice a change. Some people's residual limbs don't change. They wear the same limb and suspension system day in day out without any problems, while others will need to make several adjustments over the course of the day. Speak to your prosthetist about problem solving ideas which may be helpful for you.

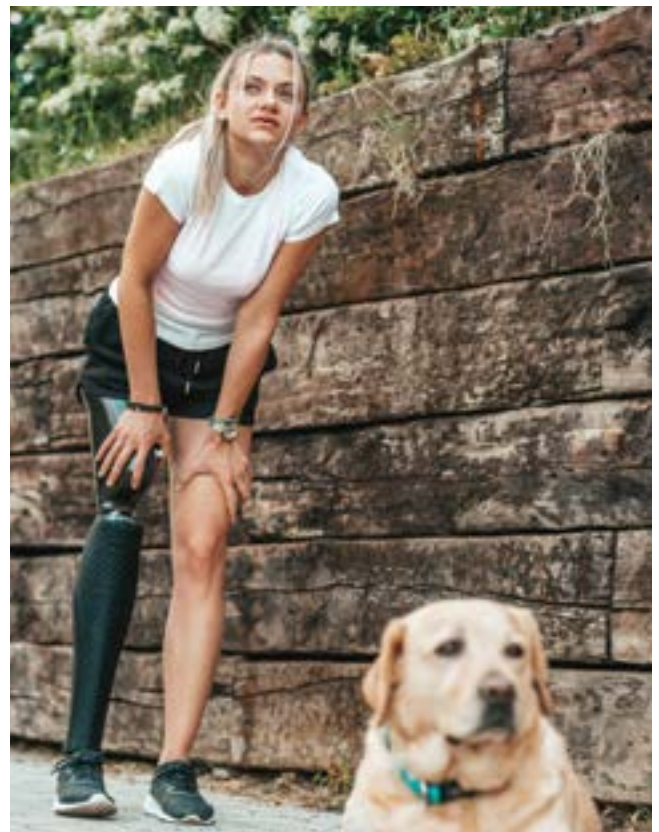
TIP



You should never wear your prosthesis if it doesn't feel right or if it causes you pain.

How often will I need a new prosthesis?

In the early stages following amputation you may notice regular changes in the size and shape of your residual limb. If that is the case, you will need to have your socket replaced so that it fits you securely and firmly. Your residual limb can take time to stabilise in size. Check in with your prosthetist when your socket doesn't feel right, is loose, or uncomfortable. Once you settle back into a regular routine your prosthesis may only need to be changed every 3 - 5 years. However you may find that you require additional sockets during this time. It's worthwhile to have an annual maintenance check to ensure that everything is working well.



ETHNOCARE | NEW PRODUCT

UNDERLAY

A thin textile sleeve worn directly against the skin **designed to help manage moisture, sweat, and heat.**



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Caring for your residual limb



Taking care of your residual limb (stump) is extremely important. You need to get into a regular routine and check your limb on a daily basis, including when you experience any pain or changes in the way it fits.

- Use a hand mirror to check the back of your stump for changes before you put your prosthesis on.
- Check your stump for markings or changes when you take your prosthesis off.
- Check for skin breaks, ulcers, dryness or cracking. Any noticeable signs of change should be immediately seen to by your doctor.



Remember: Your prosthesis should not cause you pain.

The skin around your stump will always be fragile and it needs to be looked after. Prevention is better than cure; report any changes to your skin to your doctor or prosthetist immediately.

During the first year following your amputation, you will notice a number of changes. Your stump may continue to reduce in size and change in shape as your body adjusts to wearing a prosthesis. You may find that you need to visit your prosthetist more frequently during this time. During the second and third



TIP



Any red marks or changes to your skin should be attended to if they do not fade 15 minutes after removing your prosthesis.

year, your body and stump will start to stabilise and the need for adjustments (changes) to your prosthesis will become less frequent.

There are a number of things that you should think about:

- **Skin hygiene** is very important; you should wash, clean and dry your residual limb (stump) daily, when bathing or having a shower as part of your regular personal hygiene routine.
- **Stump socks and prosthetic liners** should be cleaned and changed daily with a gentle fragrance-free anti-bacterial soap, and rinsed well. More often if you sweat heavily during warmer months. Always dry your socks and liners properly.
- **Stop** wearing your prosthesis if you have any pain or discomfort.
- **Wear** safe and comfortable shoes.



Residual limb pain can sometimes be caused by scar tissue, neuromas and other underlying issues such as; a prosthesis which is not aligned correctly. If you are experiencing pain, speak to your prosthetist immediately.



Increased body temperature

Amputees often report an increase in their body temperature. This can be caused by a number of reasons;

1. Less body surface area - making it more difficult to reduce the body's temperature. The skin is our largest breathing organ and any amputation results in less skin surface area
2. A greater level of energy expenditure. Using a prosthesis (especially lower limb) requires more energy - the more energy you use the warmer the body gets. This can lead to a loss of heat tolerance and greater amounts of perspiration/sweat

If you are affected by increased body temperatures make sure you drink plenty of water to replace what you have lost by sweating. Try to limit the amount of caffeine and soft drinks, and wear light breathable clothing.

You may find that during warmer months you will need to change your stump socks more

frequently. You may also need to take off your liner and dry it (if you sweat a lot) and re-donn or swap it with a clean, dry liner.

Hair removal

Amputees regularly ask about shaving or waxing their stump. Your healthcare team will discourage you from doing this. If you do decide to wax or shave your stump and the hair follicle becomes infected, you may be unable to wear your prosthesis until the infection clears. Seek advice and a second opinion if you are worried or concerned.

TIP



If you are unsure how to explain a skin problem or red marks on your skin take a photo. A photo will help you to explain the problem to your clinician at your next appointment.

Prosthetics explained



There are many different kinds of prosthetic devices. You need to ensure that your prosthesis will help you to achieve your goals.

Prosthetics come in many shapes and sizes. You, your prosthetist, physiotherapist and your doctor will work with you to choose the most suitable prosthesis for you. This will depend things like:

- Your general level of mobility
- The condition of your residual limb (stump)
- Your weight
- Types of activities you do
- Your ability to look after yourself and manage your healthcare
- Your goals
- Any other health issues

Prosthetic components have weight limits and recommendations based on a person's mobility or function. To achieve the best outcomes, you will need to discuss your goals and what you are hoping the prosthesis can enable you to do.

You may like to seek help from a family member or carer to assist you to decide on the type of prosthesis that will best suit you. For example, as people age and/or other problems occur, some types of prostheses may be hard to put on. If you put on (donn) your prosthesis in the wrong way it can cause problems and be unsafe and uncomfortable. Your doctor or prosthetist may suggest an easy prosthetic system in order to keep you mobile and functioning.

Sometimes a certain type of prosthesis looks like a great choice, but problems may occur, that is why trialling different types of prosthetic devices can be helpful.

If you are a lower limb amputee sometimes prostheses, or the components of a prosthesis, are referred to by their 'K' classification. This is simply a measure of activity, for example:

- **K0**, Means that the person is unable to walk or transfer safely and that the prosthesis will not enhance mobility.
- **K1**, Suitable for use on level surfaces at steady speeds. That is someone who only walks indoors and short distances outdoors for example to the car.
- **K2**, Suitable for outdoor use but at a low activity level. For example: someone who



manages steps and slopes but walks limited distances and may use a stick or another aid.

- **K3**, Suitable for general outdoor use, but not including sports and other high impact activities. i.e. someone who walks in most commonly encountered environments, at varying speeds, long distances when required and usually without an aid.
- **K4**, Suitable for high impact use. For those people who have unrestricted mobility and may impose higher than usual forces on their prosthesis, e.g. sports, manual work.

TIP



Regardless of your level of amputation; if you are going to use a prosthesis you need to use it regularly to maintain your skills.

Componentry manufacturers rate their components according to these classes or mobility grades. This is why your prosthetist will ask you about your activities so they can choose the best device, that is safe and suits your lifestyle.

Using a prosthetic limb can take a large amount of energy because you have to compensate for the loss of bone and muscle of the amputated limb. A person fitted with an above knee prosthesis may need to use up to sixty percent more energy to walk. For this reason some people choose not to use a prosthesis. If this is the case the option of a 'cosmetic-only' prosthesis could be the best choice for you.

People with upper limb amputations may decide not to use a prosthesis at all and/or may only wear a prosthetic arm for certain activities such as: work around the home, riding a bike or doing a particular activity.

Funding for a prosthesis

People are often concerned about the costs of getting a prosthesis. During the course of your rehabilitation funding for your prosthesis should be discussed with you. Your prosthesis is generally covered by funding from the public health system or the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Generally speaking, the following categories apply.

- If you lost your limb due to disease or illness, you will most likely be covered by the public health system in your state or territory or the (NDIS) if you are under the age of 65
- If your amputation was due was traumatic such as a motor vehicle accident or workplace accident, and compensation is identified as a possibility, the insurance company will most likely fund your prosthesis.
- Veterans who either lost their limb as a result of injuries received while serving, or who have a Gold Card, will have their prostheses paid for by the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Defence Force.
- Most Private Health Insurance companies do not allocate funding for prosthetics, however it is worth checking with your insurer if you are uncertain as they may cover partial costs.



Remember, adjusting to limb loss is a big step and it takes time. Set yourself realistic goals. Be involved, and try to give your prosthetist feedback about the prosthesis so that they can assist you with the best outcomes. Be kind to yourself, and take time to think about how far you have come as you work toward regaining your independence, mobility and confidence.

There is usually a set requirement for how often your prosthesis and socket can be replaced. However, if your prosthesis or socket needs changing before the usual time period, then your prosthetist should manage this for you.

If you are funded by the public health system and have limited access to the prosthetic of your choice, you can make a financial contribution toward your prosthesis. It is important to remember that you can trial most prosthetic devices before facing out of pocket expenses. Most prosthetic componentry companies will enable you to have a foot, knee or hand/arm on loan for approximately two weeks to try before you make the final decision about which device is best for you. This will give you the chance to see if a different prosthetic device gives you better outcomes, such as;

- More energy at the end of the day
- Provides you with more stability and confidence
- Enables you to be more active
- Increases your upper limb function

You are usually limited to trialling two or three different devices, so make the most of this opportunity.

TIP



If you decide to purchase your own items prior to the waiting period, government reimbursements and funding subsidies may not apply.



National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The National Disability Insurance Scheme provides financial assistance for people with disabilities.

If you are under 65 years of age you should complete an Access Request Form to register or for more information about the NDIS contact their office on 1800 800 110 or visit ndis.gov.au.

Selecting your service provider

In each state and territory there is a variety of prosthetic clinics. You may decide that you would prefer to see a prosthetist who is close to home, or close to your workplace. It is entirely up to you who you choose to make your prosthesis. You may even prefer to meet with a couple of different prosthetists to discuss your needs.

A list of prosthetic service providers can be found on the Limbs 4 Life website. Go to the **'Find a prosthetist'** section to find out more, at the back of this Guide

TIP



Navigating funding systems can be difficult. If you need some help please contact Limbs 4 Life so that we can direct you.





Assistive devices

An assistive device is the name given to equipment which aids your ability such as: wheelchairs and walking aids. If you are publicly funded, financial assistance for some aids and equipment including: wheelchairs and home modifications like ramps, bathroom equipment and shower chairs and vehicle modifications (such as left foot accelerators, hand controls or wheelchair car hoists) are available from some state/territory-based schemes. But there is likely to be a waiting period.

You should seek information relating to the funding available prior to purchasing any equipment. Speak to your healthcare team for information relating to these items.

There are a range of devices which can make life easier. If you have a special request, don't hesitate to ask your healthcare team, chances are it may be available.



Returning to your place of residence



One of the most important things for people who face a life changing event is getting their lives back to the way it was prior to that event. The same applies for people who have had an amputation. Some people call it, finding their new 'normal'.

Going home safety

Heading home for the first time can raise mixed feelings; excitement, anticipation and anxiety for both you and your family. Moving around a hospital can be very different to navigating the way around your home. Many homes have lots of stairs to access the property, carpet instead of vinyl floors, toilets and bathrooms that are not always easily accessible and doorways that are small and difficult to enter or exit.

Ensuring that you are going to a place that is safe and accessible is important. Your occupational therapist will discuss options for modifications and assistive devices prior to your discharge. They may arrange a visit to your place of residence (with you where possible), to discuss your needs.

There are a number of things that you need to consider prior to leaving hospital:

- Think about how you will access your home?
- Is your home accessible to move around?
- Can you get into and out of the shower/toilet?

It is important that your place of residence is accessible and safe.

Below are a number of suggestions that you may wish to consider:

Tips for lower limb amputees

- Remove mats on polished floors and tiles. They are a nuisance for wheelchairs and also trip hazards for prosthetic legs
- Hand rails for stairs can assist with balance and stability
- Furniture like coffee tables and hall tables can be challenging to navigate around; place them near walls and out of the way of the main thoroughfare
- Anti-slip mats for the shower/bathroom floor are safer options and the use of a shower stool, chair or bath-seat can help to prevent trips and falls. Your occupational therapist will discuss the option of grip

bars in the wet areas (such as the shower, bathroom and toilet).

- Arrange things to be in easy reach so that you are able to do things for yourself

Tips for upper limb amputees

- Regular shoe laces can be exchanged for specialised laces or alternatively you can use shoes which do up with Velcro.
- Devices such as a combined knife/fork can make eating easier.
- Specialised computer keyboards are available for people with one arm.
- Specialised boards are available to make things like cutting, chopping and opening jars easier to manage.
- Some amputees will opt for Velcro instead of studs or buttons to enable them to change doona covers

Although changes may need to be made and you will face some challenges, becoming an amputee may mean that you can do most of the things you used to do, but in a different way. Sometimes it's just a matter of careful planning, organisation and learning as you go.

Amputee checklist

Important things to consider when leaving rehabilitation

As an amputee, returning home to your place of residence can sometimes present some challenges. This checklist has been created to help you to think of some of the things that you may need to consider before leaving rehabilitation.

Discharge planning

- ☐ Has a discharge plan been explained to you and your loved one?
- ☐ Are you aware of the ongoing treatment plan and outpatient services?
- ☐ Do you have a date for your next appointment?
- ☐ Have you been provided with pain management solutions?

Funding supports

- ☐ Do you understand what funding is available and what you are eligible for?
My Aged Care/ National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)/ Workcover/
Motor Vehicle Accident Insurance/ Dept of Veteran Affairs
- ☐ Has someone helped you to complete a funding application? (if relevant)

Amputee support

- ☐ Have you been provided with Limbs 4 Life information; amputee magazines, information about local amputee support groups or events?
- ☐ Have you been given the opportunity to speak with another amputee? If you would like to, please contact our office and we will arrange this for you

Healthcare providers

- ☐ Have updates and referrals been sent to your general treating healthcare providers?

Access to your home or place of residence

- ☐ Has an Occupational Therapist been to your home or place of residence and conducted an assessment?
- ☐ Are you able to access your property? (think about steps to your front door, driveway access)
- ☐ Are you able to access your toilet, bathroom, shower?
- ☐ Do you need supports at home like grip bars, handrails, shower chair/stool?
- ☐ If you are using a wheelchair, can your chair fit through doorways?

Personal Care

- ☐ Do you need support with your personal care? (showering, toileting etc?)
- ☐ Do you need access to transport support to attend follow up outpatient appointments?
- ☐ If you are an upper limb amputee, do you have access to the devices you may need for your personal hygiene, cooking and eating?

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Driving

Driving may be an important part of your independence. If you have medical approval and your health checks out you will be able to have your licence re-instated. In some states/territories people are required to be re-tested for their driver's licence and/or have restrictions placed on their licences such as: 'automatic only' vehicles.

Vehicles can be modified to suit your needs and there are a number of companies which specialise in the re-fit of left-foot accelerator pedals, wheelchair hoists and the installation of spinner knobs or hand controls. Some people even manage to ride their motorbikes again. Push bikes and motorcycles can also be modified if required.

The modification of a vehicle can vary depending on the age of your car and the state you reside in. Some states offer financial support via their aids and equipment programs.

Employment

If you were employed prior to your amputation, then going back to work is yet another step toward regaining your independence. Some employers are very supportive when it comes to making the work place accessible. In instances where accessibility is a problem, speak to your employer, local Member of Parliament or the local council in the area of your place of employment to find what funding support is available.

You may even like to engage the services of an organisation which can assist you to find employment and/or re-train for a different job role; especially if you are no longer able to fulfill your previous working requirements. Career advisers can assist you to develop a return to work plan. If you are eligible for the NDIS, you might consider returning to work as one of your goals, or contact us about our Ramping Up 4 Work program.

Parking and travelling

Your Social Worker will help you with the application process to obtain state government concessions if you are eligible. These can include:

- Accessible Parking Permit
- Multi-Purpose Taxi Program Card

The Multi-Purpose Taxi Program provides the user with a financial discount on the metered fare. The discount value can differ in each state or territory. (Conditions apply). If you plan on travelling interstate, the Taxi Directorate can allocate you interstate vouchers which can be used while you are away.

Some states also provide travel vouchers to cover the cost of travel to medical appointments. Ask your healthcare provider for information regarding financial travel support.



If you require assistance at the airport advise the carrier at the time of making your booking. Most airlines and airports have disability support in place.

While many hotels offer accessible rooms not all accessible rooms comply with the Australian standard, making it difficult for people to be independent away from home. If you have specific requirements relating to your accommodation needs, speak to a representative from the hotel rather than the appointed booking agent.



Health matters preventing future problems



Keeping as fit and as healthy as you can after your amputation is important. Effectively managing your long-term health can assist you to prevent future problems.

Physical health

Feet

The leading causes of lower limb amputations are complications resulting from diabetes and peripheral vascular disease. Any injury to a foot with poor circulation will be slow to heal or may fail to heal at all. If you have lost a limb due to diabetes it is important that you take steps to prevent this from happening to your remaining limb.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind;

- Check your foot every day for any changes
- Use a hand mirror to see underneath your foot
- Check inside your shoes for foreign objects before putting them on
- Wear correct fitting shoes at all times and never go barefoot

- Wash and dry your feet properly every day
- Change your socks daily
- Have an annual foot check from a Podiatrist
- Maintain good blood sugar levels

TIP



If you have a wound on your foot – DON'T WAIT!

Early treatment of foot wounds increases the possibility of healing. If you have noticed a change, contact your doctor, podiatrist or healthcare provider immediately.



Act Fast, Recover Strong, Live Well

Helpful information and resources created by mob, for mob, to support patients and their families to navigate the amputation journey.

Support After Amputation:

A Guide for Families

What to Expect After Amputation

The recovery process after an amputation involves physical and emotional challenges.

After surgery, your loved one may experience pain, swelling, and limited mobility. They may require help with basic tasks such as dressing, bathing, and moving around.

Over time, they may begin physical therapy to help regain strength and mobility, and it's important to support them through this process.

Nursing and Care Requirements

Depending on the type of amputation and their health condition, short or long term nursing care may be needed. Hospital staff will help arrange this before your family member comes home.

This could include:

- Wound care
- Medication management

A home health nurse or other professional services may be available to assist with ongoing care. Speak with healthcare providers to get the support your family needs.



Support After Amputation: A Guide for Families

Live Well:

Returning Home After Amputation

Getting your home ready

Your home should be a place where you feel safe, comfortable, and able to move around with ease. Making changes before you return can help you manage your recovery and prevent falls or injuries.

Depending on your needs, you and your healthcare team might consider:

- Checking your moveability around your home. Is it wheelchair friendly?
- Installing handrails and grab bars in the bathroom and stairways
- Moving furniture to create clear and wide pathways
- Changing the height of your bed and seating areas. For example, adjustable beds
- Using non-slip mats
- Removing trip hazards such as rugs, cords, or clutter
- Installing ramps
- Adaptive kitchen tools, reachers and grabbers
- Car modifications so you can resume using your vehicle

Planning ahead of time with your healthcare team will make your return home smoother, save unnecessary expensive changes, and allow you to focus on healing and regaining your independence.



Live Well: Returning Home After Amputation

Recovering Well

Recovery continues once you return home, and looking after your health becomes an ongoing priority. Setting up the right support will help you manage your recovery, stay comfortable, and build independence as you continue to heal.

Medical Check-Ups and Rehabilitation

It's important to schedule follow-up appointments with your local doctor, rehabilitation team, amputation nurse, and prosthetics specialists and any other involved in your care to help track your healing progress, manage any pain or discomfort, and address any concerns that arise to ensure that your recovery stays on track.

Physiotherapy and occupational therapy are important to help you to regain strength, balance, and mobility. These therapies can help you learn new ways to move, improve your independence in daily activities.

It is important to keep looking after your other foot. Keeping in regular contact with your podiatrist will help keep an eye on things as you go.

Work closely with your healthcare team to identify the best supports within your community, an at-home program and/or telehealth support.

Act Fast:

Making Empowered Decisions

Considering Amputation - What You Need To Know

Hearing that you need an amputation can be overwhelming, and it is normal to have lots of questions and worries. But being prepared can help you take control of your journey and may even lead to better outcomes.

By understanding your options, asking the right questions, and seeking support, you can make informed decisions and feel more confident about what lies ahead.

Making an Informed Decision

When considering amputation options, it's important to evaluate all the potential impacts to make a well-informed choice.

Social

Your recovery as you adjust to life after an amputation can challenge your relationships and connections with your community. There are many programs available that support social reintegration and help create new social connections, opening doors for fresh friendships and opportunities.

Physical Impacts

Adjusting to the physical aspects of amputation may involve challenges such as pain management, physical limitations, and the need for rehabilitation. Access to services can help you manage these limitations, improve mobility, and increase independence. With the right support, many people find that they can regain significant function and lead an active life.

Emotional

The emotional journey of amputation may bring challenges such as grief, loss, and shifts in your sense of identity. Understanding these emotional impacts and how to cope with them is crucial. Support is available through counselling services and peer support groups, including those specifically designed for amputees, as well as your family and healthcare staff.

Legal Impacts

Legal protections are in place to ensure you receive the necessary healthcare and support, as well as to safeguard against unfair treatment in the workplace and other areas of life. Familiarising yourself with these rights and available services can help you make informed decisions and ensure you receive the support you're entitled to.

Seeking support from healthcare professionals, community organisations, and local Indigenous health services can help guide you through the process. Talking with community leaders can also help make sure your cultural needs and personal preferences are taken into account along the way, including advice on returning your limb to be buried on Country.



Act Fast: Making Empowered Decisions

page 1

Act Fast:

Planning for Amputation

Planning for Amputation

Losing a limb is a significant change, and it's natural to feel uncertain about what's ahead. Careful planning can help make the process smoother and ensure you have the right support in place. This guide provides key considerations before your hospital stay, during your time in the city, and when planning your return home.

Planning Your Hospital Stay

Preparing ahead of time can help reduce stress and ensure that everything is in place for your surgery and recovery.

Understanding Your Procedure

It's important to understand your surgery so you can feel more prepared and confident. Every amputation is different, depending on the reason for it, where the limb is removed, and your overall health. Talking to your doctor and amputee nurse about your surgery will help you know what to expect and how to plan for your recovery, so you feel ready for the next steps.



Act Fast: Planning for Amputation

Recover Strong:

Your Amputation Journey

Your Amputation Journey - What to Expect?

Undergoing an amputation is a major life event that requires understanding and support. It is important to know what to expect during your recovery, the roles of your medical team, the importance of self-advocacy, the rehabilitation process, and the Aboriginal support services available to you and your family.

While the amputation journey can be challenging, with the right support and resources, you can lead a fulfilling and independent life.



Recover Strong: Your Amputation Journey

Page 1



Co-created by South Australian Aboriginal community members with lived experience of amputation, in partnership with the Wardliparingga Aboriginal Health Equity Unit at SAHMRI.



Weight management

Due to the reduced levels of activity, weight issues can be a problem for people with lower limb amputations. Try different forms of exercise and stay as fit as you can. A healthy body will assist your overall condition; mentally, physically and emotionally. Keep your diet healthy. People with diabetes should speak to their dietician or seek information from Diabetes Australia for further assistance with weight and diet management.

Your residual limb (stump) will reflect any changes that occur in your general body weight. If you gain weight your stump is likely to get bigger and your socket may become too tight. If you lose weight your stump will get smaller and your prosthesis may become too loose. Generally changes of more than 2-3kilograms will show up in an altered socket fit, so try to maintain an even body weight.

Stump changes can happen for other health related reasons. For example: anything that affects the fluid balance of the body can affect

your stump size. Kidney or heart conditions can cause this, as can some medications, particularly those which cause fluid loss. Other causes of changes in stump size include; weather (especially extreme heat,) menstrual cycles, alcohol intake, activity and air travel.

Managing change

In time, you should have a fairly good idea how your prosthesis should look and how it should feel, when it is fitting properly. If you are unsure then talk to your prosthetist and ask them to explain it to you. You should learn to be familiar with how your stump looks so you can notice any changes in appearance, or skin markings.

There are so many types of prostheses and people are all individual. The best way to deal with changes is to be aware of your own body and its responses, be informed on how your prosthesis should work and engage with your doctor and prosthetist if you ever have a question.

Emotional health



Your emotional health is just as important as your physical health. Managing problems and addressing concerns sooner rather than later is an important part of your recovery.



Sexuality and intimacy

Intimacy and sexual expression are an important part of every person's wellbeing. Many changes can occur to your private life when you are affected by injury, illness or disability. Changes may be both physical and psychological. For example: you may be feeling tiredness and have a reduced desire for intimacy. You may also struggle with fears of rejection by your loved ones.

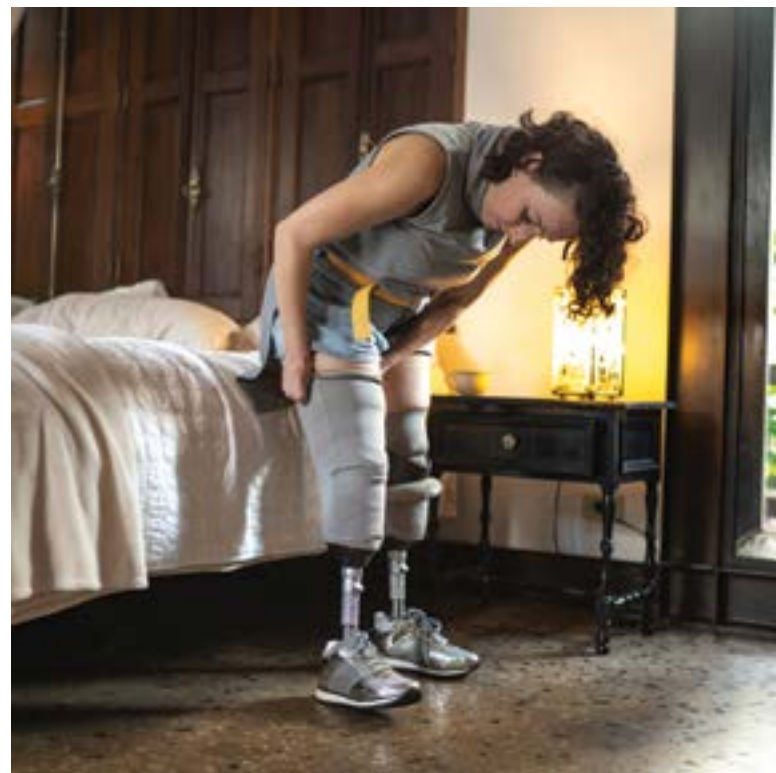
Some of the things that you can do include; focusing on your pleasure and your partner's pleasure. Don't keep thinking about how you want to perform.

Sexuality, sexual desire and sexual functioning are often affected, which can have a significant impact on your quality of life, health and wellbeing.

Unfortunately, mainly due to embarrassment, we often don't receive or access help in this area of our health. Even if you feel embarrassed or uneasy, it is important that you seek assistance for your sexual health concerns.

We are all sexual beings. The term refers to all of the ways we express loving feelings and emotions. Our whole body responds to sexual attraction. Sexuality includes feelings of arousal expressed by touching, kissing and caressing. After an amputation you may want to find

new positions that are more comfortable. For instance, you could add some pillows if you have problems with your balance. Explore and enjoy finding out ways that work best for you and your partner.



Body image and self esteem

Following an amputation, individuals are often concerned about their appearance and how this will impact on family, friends and others. As human beings, we all think about how we look and how others see us. Even though your



body has changed physically, it's important to remember that you are still the same person inside. Focus on learning new ways to do things you enjoyed before.

As an amputee, you not only have to deal with changes in how your body works and feels, but also how it looks. The more you focus on what is missing, not just the limb but also things you could do before, the more likely you are to become depressed and angry.

Amputation will initially affect your self-confidence and confidence is a big factor in dating and maintaining relationships. Males sometimes relate the loss of a limb to the

loss of their manhood, while women tend to be more concerned about the impact it will have on their sexuality. Amputees often worry about how people will perceive them or that others will stare, ask inappropriate questions or treat you as a lesser person. If someone asks a question or makes an inappropriate comment, point out why you find it offensive. Hopefully they will understand.

If you are learning to use a prosthesis, your body image is likely to change once you feel more comfortable with the limb. You will notice this when you begin to feel lost without it.

Family and friends

Friends and family members often go through the process of grief and loss, similar to the person who has lost a limb. It is a major change for everyone.

You may find that family members and friends will try to do things for you and often have your best intentions at heart. On occasions this can be frustrating, especially when you are trying to re-learn to do new things for yourself. Try not to get angry at those who are too helpful. Explain your situation to them and what you are trying to achieve in a passive tone. Let them know that it's important for you to learn to do things for yourself, even if it takes longer for you to do them. Like anything, it's a process and you will need friends and family to be supportive.

Being a carer

Carers are people who provide unpaid support to family members and friends who have a disability. Carers play a vital role in helping people to recover and can provide support on a day to day basis.

Caring for someone

For many carers, the role of caring can sometimes be stressful and sometime demanding especially if you have other responsibilities such as children, family or work. If you are new to being a carer and feel like you need support or assistance download our information sheet on 'Carers'.

What if I am new to being a carer?

In the case of your loved one having an accident or injury; carers can often be thrown into the carers role with little or no time to prepare. Similarly, you may be notified that your partner, spouse or parent is about to undergo life-changing surgery, such as an amputation and find yourself in a similar position. If you are feeling overwhelmed and unsure of where to begin and/or how you can best assist and support your loved one speak to the people around you.

Seven tips for carers

1. Do something for yourself that makes you happy.
2. Meet up with other carers in a social setting; other carers can be a great source of support.
3. Join a local carers support group.
4. See if there are local supports available to enable you to have a break. This may mean that someone else washes the floor or vacuums for you.
5. Allow yourself to have a bad day, it's okay.
6. Take some time-out every now and then.
7. Ask for and seek support when you need it.



Finding your new normal



Finding your new normal is a common term used by amputees who are navigating the pathways and journey of change since undergoing amputation. It takes time to get used to different ways of doing things.



Living with limb loss

People lose limbs for a variety of different reasons. Adapting to limb loss can take time; especially due to the fact that it's permanent.

Some people adjust to the use of a prosthesis faster than others. Some people don't use a prosthesis and need to adjust to using crutches or a wheelchair, some people need to teach themselves new skills; like writing with their non-dominant hand. For this reason it is common for people to seek out their 'new' normal. A 'normal' way of doing the things you used to do; differently from how you did them before.



Getting back to activities

It's important to start thinking about some of the activities that you used to do and if you would like to do them again. It's also important to work out how. Some activities may be easy to get back to, while others may take some planning and thought. Taking part in day to day activities including: going back to work, meeting with friends, cooking dinner for the family or shopping at a local centre. It also may mean being able to move around your home and feeling confident and safe doing so, getting back out into your garden/your local community, spending time with your friends, or planning that holiday you have always dreamed of taking.

For some people finding their 'new' normal and knowing when that time has come means that you are back on track and starting to make progress in your world. When you find your 'new' normal and start to feel comfortable in your own skin, you can get on with your life, move forward, and start living again.

TIP



It's never too late to learn new things.

Recreation and leisure

Keeping active following amputation is important, but which activity is right for you? Ask yourself, "do I want to do the same activities that I did before or is it time to try something new?" We all know that being active is good for our health. For some people being active might be going for a walk, spending time in the garden, grabbing a rod and going fishing or taking part in a local community class of Tai Chi.

If you don't feel confident about trying a new activity on your own, look out for 'Come and Try' days. The benefit of days like this is that you can try an activity or piece of equipment that you may have not used before. Often local community groups and organisations run events and activities for people to try. These activities support people to take part in a safe and friendly environment. If you don't want to go alone why not take a friend along, you might even make some new friends along the way.

Getting active

The idea of trying something new can be off putting for some people. You won't know if you like something until you try. You may be feeling anxious or a little bit nervous and this is quite normal. If you need some help trying something new don't be afraid to ask. There is a wide range of assistive technology and devices which can make participating in the activity of your choice easier.

If you have problems:

- reaching up
- bending down
- with your balance
- accessing the right equipment, or
- if your prosthesis gets in the way

Speak to your healthcare provider about the various devices or exercises which can help you to get back to what you like to do or help you to try something new.



One way of staying healthy is keeping the mind and the body active!

National Prosthetic Provider Listing

Australian Capital Territory

Canberra Health Service - Prosthetic and Orthotic Services

Village Creek Centre,
37 Kingsmill Street,
Kambah, ACT 2902

02 5124 1057

canberrahealthservices.act.gov.au/services-and-clinics/services/prosthetic-orthotic-service

Momentum Therapy Australia

Unit 6, 28 Thynne Street
Bruce, ACT 2617

02 6210 0060

mtherapy.com.au

New South Wales

Albury Prosthetic and Orthotic Service

Lavington Campus,
335 Reservoir Road,
Lavington, NSW 2641

02 6049 0100

apos.enable.health.nsw.gov.au

ForMotion Clinic Alexandria

Suite 1A, 170-180 Bourke Road,
Alexandria, NSW 2015

02 8339 4784

formotion.com.au

ForMotion Clinic Central Coast

Suite 4, 14 Pioneer Avenue,
Tuggerah, NSW 2259

02 4047 8755

formotion.com.au

ForMotion Clinic Hunter

Suite 4, 240 Pacific Highway,
Charlestown, NSW 2290

02 4969 8700

formotion.com.au

ForMotion Clinic Northmead

2 Redbank Road,
Northmead, NSW 2152

02 9890 8123

formotion.com.au

ForMotion Clinic Upper X

Unit G.01, 182-184 Bourke Road,
Alexandria, NSW 2015

02 8838 1680

formotion.com.au

Hunter Prosthetics and Orthotics Service (HPOS)

Limb Centre Building/John Hunter Hospital,
Lookout Road, New Lambton Heights, NSW 2305

02 4921 4151

hpos.enable.health.nsw.gov.au

Innovo Prosthetics

Unit 1, 2-4 Burrows Road,
St Peters, NSW 2044

02 9649 4177

innovoprosthetics.com

NovitaTech Orthotics and Prosthetics - Broken Hill

78 Chloride Street,
Broken Hill, NSW 2880

08 8243 8261

novitatech.com.au

oapl Alexandria

1/119 McEvoy Street,
Alexandria, NSW 2015
02 9319 1955
oapl.com.au

oapl Parramatta

Suite 1, 2a Cowper Street,
Parramatta, NSW 2150
02 9319 1955
oapl.com.au

Spao Ottobock Care - Ballina

203A Southern Cross Drive,
Ballina, NSW 2478
02 6687 0777
spao.com.au

Spao Ottobock Care - Coffs Harbour

3/14 Isles Drive,
Coffs Harbour, NSW 2450
02 6650 0027
spao.com.au

Spao Ottobock Care - Gregory Hills

The Hub, 1/31 Lasso Road,
Gregory Hills, NSW 2557
02 4250 2950
spao.com.au

Spao Ottobock Care - Penrith

Somerset Specialist Centre,
Level 3, Suite 4,
38 Somerset Street,
Kingswood, NSW 2747
02 4250 2940
spao.com.au

Spao Ottobock Care - Nowra

21 Moss Street,
Nowra, NSW 2541
02 4250 2930
spao.com.au

Spao Ottobock Care - Wollongong

Level 2, 3 Rawson Street,
Wollongong, NSW 2500
02 4250 2900
spao.com.au

X-Tremity Prosthetics & Orthotics - Dubbo

Dubbo Private Hospital
3 Moran Drive, Dubbo, NSW 2830
02 4415 9510
x-tremity.com

X-Tremity Prosthetics & Orthotics - Nowra

95 Plunkett Street,
Nowra, NSW 2541
02 4415 9510
x-tremity.com

X-Tremity Prosthetics & Orthotics - Newcastle

16 Lambton Road,
Broadmeadow, NSW 2292
02 4415 9510
x-tremity.com

X-Tremity Prosthetics & Orthotics - Woolongong

The Central Building,
UOW Innovation Campus, Puckey Avenue,
Wollongong, NSW 2500
02 4415 9510
x-tremity.com

X-Tremity Prosthetics & Orthotics - Bega and South Coast

Call for locations
02 4415 9510
x-tremity.com

Queensland

Artificial Limbs and Appliances

Unit 1/67 Depot Street,
Banyo, QLD 4014
07 3266 1255
alaprosthetics.com.au

Custom Prosthetics

Unit A2, 50 Railway Street,
Mudgeeraba, QLD 4213
07 5607 0840
custompo.com.au

Dynamic Prosthetics and Orthotics Rockhampton

Suite 5, 49-51 Bolsover Street,
Rockhampton, QLD 4700
07 5441 5135
dynamicpno.com.au

Dynamic Prosthetics and Orthotics Sunshine Coast

36 Nambour Mapleton Road,
Nambour, QLD 4560
07 5441 5135
dynamicpno.com.au

Leading Edge Prosthetics

Unit 3/6 Palmer Place,
Murarrie, QLD 4172
07 3890 7788
leadingedgeprosthetics.com.au

Next Level Orthotics & Prosthetics - Sunshine Coast

68 Poinciana Avenue,
Tewantin / Noosa, QLD 4565
07 5211 1522
nextlevelop.com.au

Next Level Orthotics & Prosthetics - Hervey Bay

5 Zephyr Street,
Scarness, Hervey Bay, QLD 4655
07 5211 1522
nextlevelop.com.au

oapl Hervey Bay

85 Beach Road,
Hervey Bay, QLD 4655
07 2100 1818
oapl.com.au

oapl South Side

4 Bowen Street,
Slacks Creek, QLD 4127
07 2802 2164
oapl.com.au

oapl Sunshine Coast

Unit 6, 6 Machinery Avenue,
Warana, QLD 4575
07 5441 2488
oapl.com.au

Prosthetic Solutions QLD

Unit 2/20 Valente Close,
Chermside, QLD 4032
1300 423 338
prostheticsolutions.com.au

Prosthetic Solutions QLD

Shop 1/66 Jessica Boulevard,
Minyama, QLD 4575
1300 423 338
prostheticsolutions.com.au

Prosthetic Solutions QLD

Unit 1/106 Flinders Parade,
North Lakes, QLD 4509
1300 423 338
prostheticsolutions.com.au

Queensland Prosthetics

Unit 16/50-56 Kellar Street,
Berrinba, QLD 4117
0476 868 811
qprosthetics.com

Spao Ottobock Care - Gold Coast

22 Frazer Street, Proxima Building,
Level 3, Southport, QLD 4215
07 5649 9650
spao.com.au

SSS Prosthetics and Orthotics

2/16 Casey Street,
Aitkenvale, QLD 4814
07 4775 1323
sssprosorth.com.au

SSS Prosthetics and Orthotics

218 McLeod Street,
Cairns, QLD 4870
07 4041 4715
sssprosorth.com.au

SSS Prosthetics and Orthotics

Visiting Clinic,
Mount Isa, QLD 4825
07 4041 4715
sssprosorth.com.au

SSS Prosthetics and Orthotics

4A Canberra Street,
North Mackay, QLD 4740
07 4953 5738
sssprosorth.com.au

South Australia

Adelaide Orthotics and Prosthetics

337 Churchill Road,
Kilburn SA 5084
0493 086 437
adelaideoandp.com.au

Artus

Unit 9, 48-52 Stanbel Road,
Salisbury Plain SA 5109
08 8102 1900
artus.clinic

Central Adelaide Local Health Network

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital,
Ground Floor, Main Block,
28 Woodville Road,
Woodville South, SA. 5011
08 8222 6734
calhn.sa.gov.au/allied-health/orthotics-prosthetics

NovitaTech Orthotics and Prosthetics Adelaide

169 Regency Road,
Croydon Park, SA, 5008
08 8243 8261
novitatech.com.au

Prostek

2 William Street,
Mile End South, SA 5031
08 8352 6511
prostek.com.au

Tasmania

Omni Prosthetics

3/29 Main Road, Claremont, TAS 7011
1300 318 366
omniprosthetics.com.au

Victoria

Austin Health - Royal Tabot Rehabilitation Centre

1 Yarra Boulevard,
Kew, VIC 3101
03 9490 7666
austin.org.au/page/701

Barwon Prosthetics and Orthotics

McKellar Centre,
45-95 Ballarat Road,
North Geelong, VIC 3215
03 4215 5488
barwonpo.com.au

Caulfield Hospital Prosthetic Department

260 Kooyong Road,
Caulfield, VIC 3162
03 9076 6261
alfredhealth.org.au/caulfield/services/prosthetics

Elevate O & P

7D Roanoak Court,
East Bendigo, VIC 3550
0479 168 608
elevateoandp.com.au

Flex Prosthetics

76 Mahoneys Rd
Thomastown VIC 3074
1300 411 777
flexprosthetics.com.au

Grampians Health Ballarat Prosthetics & Orthotics Service

Queen Elizabeth Centre,
102 Ascot Street South,
Ballarat, VIC 3350
03 5320 3700
gh.org.au/services/prosthetics-and-orthotics/

Head to Foot Orthotics and Prosthetics

39 Centre Way,
Croydon South, VIC 3136
1300 540 286
htfop.com.au

Head to Foot Orthotics and Prosthetics

Shed 3, 42 Paddys Drive,
Delacombe, VIC 3356
1300 540 286
htfop.com.au

Latrobe Regional Hospital

10 Village Avenue,
Traralgon, VIC 3844
03 5173 8383
lrh.com.au/find-a-service

Massons Healthcare Knoxfield

Unit 15/111 Lewis Road,
Knoxfield, VIC 3180
03 9898 0011
massonshealthcare.com.au

Massons Healthcare Werribee

Wyndham Physio and Rehabilitation,
90 Cottrell Street, Werribee, VIC 3030
03 9898 0011
massonshealthcare.com.au

Northern Victoria Orthotic & Prosthetic Service

20 North Street, Shepparton, VIC 3630
03 5822 4277
nvops.com.au

oapl Bendigo

401-405 High Street,
Golden Square, VIC 3555
03 5441 4333
oapl.com.au

oapl Carrum Downs

Level 1, 113A Hall Road,
Carrum Downs, VIC 3201
1300 866 275
oapl.com.au

oapl Clayton

26-32 Clayton Road, Clayton, VIC 3169
1300 866 275
oapl.com.au

oapl Footscray

81 Cowper Street, Footscray, VIC 3011
1300 866 275
oapl.com.au

Omni Prosthetics

Unit 3, 34 Redland Drive,
Vermont, VIC 3133
1300 318 366
omniprosthetics.com.au

Ortho Advantage

14a Williams Street, Inverloch, VIC 3996
0490 282 949
orthoadvantage.com.au

Ortho Advantage

3-5 Livingstone Street, Traralgon, VIC 3844
0490 282 949
orthoadvantage.com.au

Ortho Advantage

27 Falls Road, Fish Creek, VIC 3959
0490 282 949
orthoadvantage.com.au

Orthotic Specialist Centre Pty Ltd

Suite 2, 603 Whitehorse Road,
Mitcham VIC 3132
03 9510 2578
orthoticspecialistcentre.com.au

Orthotic Specialist Centre Pty Ltd

311 High Street, Prahran, VIC 3181
03 9510 2578
orthoticspecialistcentre.com.au

Peninsula Orthotics

11 Bennetts Road, Mornington, VIC 3931
03 5976 8888
peninsulaorthotics.com.au

ProMotion Prosthetics

6 Rings Road,
Moorabbin, VIC 3189
03 9532 5098
pmprosthetics.com.au

ProMotion Prosthetics

886 Station Street,
Box Hill North, VIC 3129
03 9532 5098
pmprosthetics.com.au

Royal Melbourne Hospital Prosthetics and Orthotics Department

Building 26,
34-54 Poplar Road,
Parkville, VIC 3052
03 8387 2271
thermh.org.au

St Vincent's Public Hospital Melbourne Prosthetics and Orthotics Department

Bolte Wing,
14 Nicholson Street,
Fitzroy, VIC 3065
03 9231 3805
svhm.org.au/education/allied-health-education/prosthetics-and-orthotics

Synergy Prosthetics Pty Ltd

42 Station Street, Fairfield, VIC 3078
0439 544 732
synergyprosthetics.com.au

X-Tremity Prosthetics & Orthotics - Bairnsdale

5 Radford Place,
Bairnsdale, VIC 3875
0490 814 080
x-tremity.com

X-Tremity Prosthetics & Orthotics - Leongatha

66 Koonwarra Road,
Leongatha, VIC 3953
0490 814 080
x-tremity.com

X-Tremity Prosthetics & Orthotics - Warragul

30 Albert Street, Warragul, VIC 3820
0490 814 080
x-tremity.com

Western Australia

Biomotion Prosthetics

Unit 5, 10 Hammond Road,
Cockburn Central, WA 6164
08 6491 9386
biomotion.com.au

oapl Bentley

Unit 2/5 Turner Avenue,
Bentley WA 6102
1300 866 275
oapl.com.au

Optimised Prosthetics & Orthotics

Mobile Services and clinic
appointments available
upon request
Servicing Perth Metro,
the Hills, and regional WA
0461 379 222
optimisedprostheticsandorthotics.com.au

Orthotic Prosthetic Solutions

2/46 Hasler Road,
Osborne Park, WA 6017
08 9328 8022
orthoticprostheticperth.com.au

The Limb Clinic (TLCU)

Unit 4/147-151 Belmont Avenue,
Belmont, WA 6104
08 9277 2988
tlcu.com.au

Appendix

Glossary of Terms

You may find that your doctors, nurses and the medical team will use words which are unfamiliar to you. Here is a list of commonly used terms and if you don't understand something make sure that you ask.

AE above elbow amputation

AFO ankle foot orthosis

AKA above knee amputation

Abduction away from the body

Adduction close to the body

Alignment position of socket in relation to foot and knee

Amputation loss of part or all of a limb

BE below elbow amputation

Bilateral double amputee

BKA below knee amputation

Check Socket a test socket which can be adapted for comfort and fit

Compression stocking an elastic garment to assist with swelling and blood flow

Cosmesis aesthetic covering of a prosthesis

Donning putting on the prosthesis

Doffing taking off the prosthesis

Dorsiflexion pointing foot upward toward the body

Eversion to turn outward

Extension straightening of the joint

Flexion bending of the joint

Gait manner of walking or moving

Lateral outside of the leg

Liner the component which is worn inside the socket

Medial inside of the leg

Neuroma end of the nerve left after amputation

Oedema swelling of the stump or residual limb

Plantar flexion toe is pointing down

Prosthesis the artificial component of arm or leg

Residual limb the part of the limb which is remaining after an amputation

Rigid dressing the hard cast which is applied to the residual limb for shrinkage, and to aid in swelling and prior to a prosthetic fitting

Shrinker a compression sock to reduce swelling

Transfemoral above the knee

Transhumeral above the elbow

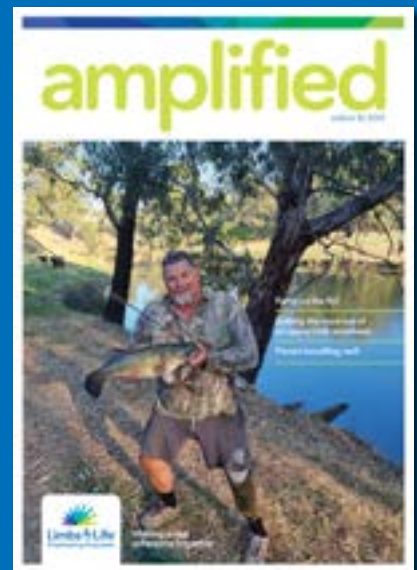
Transradial below the elbow

Transtibial below the knee

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