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edition **3** | 2026



Shane's mission to make riders safer

Exercise for amputees, why it matters

Bernie's back on his bike!

Phillip's creative genius

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As 2026 draws to a close, Limbs 4 Life is thrilled with our achievements this year. Amplify workshops were delivered in 9 major cities around the country. Feedback from the workshops was overwhelmingly positive. Delegates reported feeling more confident to self-advocate and had a greater understanding of their 'rights' going forward. More than 300 amputees attended these workshops throughout the year, and we loved delivering each session.

The National Amputee Prosthetic Satisfaction survey is in the incredibly capable hands of Monash University researchers, who are beyond astounded and excited by the data and feedback. Over 940 people completed the survey, a record result! We can't wait to present the findings to you. The data will be used to alert governments and healthcare providers about changes to the system which need to be made. Thank you for taking the time to provide us with your feedback!

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Innovating passion into riding – meet Shane

Shane's left arm was amputated after a motorcycle accident in 1999.

I didn't have the best childhood, and the first seven years were particularly rough. My Dad stepped up though, and he shaped me into the man I am today. He and I worked mostly on cars and on farm equipment as we lived on a sizeable orchard with a variety of fruit trees.

School bored the heck out of me and I had terrible results. I told the guidance counsellor that I wanted to design and draw things for a living. He looked at my school marks, grimaced, and told me to get a trade as a mechanic. So, that's what I did - graduated high school Friday, started working as a motorcycle mechanic on Monday. I did that for a while but lost my license in dramatic fashion – arrested, the whole deal. Lost my job and fell into the army. Not long after that, I had the accident that cost me an arm.

When I left hospital after the accident, I was full of male ego and stubbornness.

Looking for a new job, I just cold-canvased places and ended up in the graphic design industry, which was a bit of a culture shock compared to what I'd been doing before! Fortunately, the place that employed me was focussed on the technical aspects of design and print processing as I'm only vaguely artistic.

The graphic design trade got me into civil

drafting - they figured I could use a computer to make pretty pictures, so drawing pictures of roads shouldn't be much different. It was very different. Thankfully, AutoCAD and I got along really well! Next thing I knew, I got my dream job - mechanical design. I worked there for a bit, then into hydraulics and back to mechanical design. I spent a long time designing high voltage mining equipment - opencut substations, IP gear and flame-proof equipment.

Throughout this period, I retrained myself to be a mechanic again - working on bikes with my dad, working on my own bikes, and then teaching my sons to turn spanners and diagnose problems. I also designed and built my riding arm. The entire process took a few years, a lot of prototypes and testing. Add that to my full life, and it took a few sleepless nights to get where it is now. I'm very happy with it. I actually had a motorcycle accident as an amputee, riding with my arm, and it performed/survived - the quick release functioned, and the arm was functional afterwards… I was not, though; I had a few broken ribs and a short stint in hospital. I could talk for days about the arm; there are more than a few crazy stories about prototyping with broom handles and 3D-printed parts, or how the first production "hand" let go of me while I was out riding. Good times, and I'm genuinely proud of the effort and grateful for the help I had from others along the way, and for my daughter's patience while Dad worked his butt off (long days and longer nights) to afford the build process.

I'm a Dad to two adult sons and a teenage daughter. They're all great kids, and I'm super proud. My boys were there from day one, watching me grow into my disability, through the good and the bad. We work on cars and bikes and play computer games together. As a Dad, it doesn't get much better. Then my beautiful, brave daughter arrived. I usually have the words to describe most things, but I cannot articulate just how much of a positive force my daughter is. Not just in my life, but with others around her and with her brothers. My daughter also loves hanging out with her old man in the shed, though it's more about music and talking! I don't mind, I love spending time with her.



Shane with his daughter, Louise

I tell them all that I'm a lucky Dad because I'm blessed, for how they're growing, and because I don't feel like it's been a conscious effort for me to shape them into who they are.

I've been a single, full-time Dad to my daughter for the last ten years. You learn a lot about yourself, being the only person your child has to rely on. You find energy where there wasn't energy, you learn quickly to be flexible, your priorities shift, you make sacrifices and take the odd gamble to make sure they're taken care of. I tell all of my kids, that as a Dad, my job is to fill them with happy memories. So, when times are tough, they'll have those memories to get them through. I've certainly had to draw on happy memories of my own to get through a tough time or two.

Motorcycling is my passion and also my mental health plan - I'd be lost without it. I'm on this big drive now, to improve motorcycle safety. Part of that is pursuing a qualification as a motorcycle instructor. It's a personal goal I set myself after a particularly rough 2025. Having taken part in some government-led motorcycle safety programs, I felt that I had to do more. I love bikes, and while riding carries an inherent element of danger, I'm not convinced they're as dangerous as they're made out to be. It's who guides you into the world of motorcycling and the riders who ride with you in the early days that set a course for you.

I also have another addiction – track days; riding my motorcycle around a racetrack. I recently did two days at Morgan Park Raceway and I'm HOOKED. I got some looks and had really positive chats with cool people about the arm I made and riding motorcycles on, and off the track.

Raceway Ride Day at Morgan Park, QLD.
Photo courtesy of Caine Batley, Mad For Media



When I'm not riding bikes, I train in martial arts - Tang Soo Do, three to four nights per week. My club is full of people who encourage, support and test each other. And, boy, NOBODY likes getting their backside kicked by a guy with one arm, so the sparring sessions and the fights I have are intense! I love it and I can't give it up.

I also love camping - sounds generic, but I throw a swag on the back of the bike and go bush. Sometimes I don't even take the swag and just rough it, sleeping on the ground. It's an activity that refreshes your awareness of what you're really capable of - stripped of luxuries, technology, and convenience, like a little reality check, overcoming tiny challenges, so that an ordinary day doesn't seem so overwhelming. Plus, nature, fire, and stars…

I have a robot arm project that I might dust off once I have some free time. I do feel that I should contribute more in spaces where I might fit or be of benefit. I wonder if I've been squandering my potential as a positive influence - not just with bikes, but as an amputee or person with a disability. I also have this habit of undervaluing my achievements, or of moving quickly on to the next thing after achieving/solving something. My time as a full-time Dad is drawing to a close, and I'll have more time to be a positive contributor and to expose myself to and overcome more challenges. I joke with my OT about learning to fly a helicopter next!



Shane designed and produced a prosthetic arm for riding his motorbike.
Photo courtesy of Caine Batley, Mad For Media

To people who have experienced amputation, I suggest you work with the people trained to help you. I did not do any of that, and I think it set me back a bit. And there's more to trauma than the limb loss, there's a mental/emotional component - don't ignore this. I did and I regret it, as it caused the greatest delay in my recovery and rebuilding my life. I made a whole lot of mistakes, found myself in cycles of winning and gaining, then failing and losing. I eventually took my doctor's advice and went to therapy, and it was a gamechanger. Also, surround yourself with loving, positive people. Those early days can get dark, and when it's like that, you can attract people who aren't in a hurry to get better, and those people tend to want you to stay there with them.

Patience and acceptance are both good things. Without those, you don't move, or if you do move, it's in circles. For me, it was the acceptance of the loss of who I was before my accident - the previous version of myself. It's like shedding an old skin and being okay with the new direction. You don't have to be all happy smiles and rainbows about it, but it's the first real step in moving forward.

Nowadays, I'm taking care of myself and my life in preparation to be the best granddad in the world. I'm in no hurry, but I'm going to be the type where the grandkids get super excited to visit me, and their parents worry about what dangerous new skill or trick I've taught them!

At publication, Shane has obtained his qualification and is a licensed and insured motorcycle instructor.

You can see Shane's motorbike setup on YouTube



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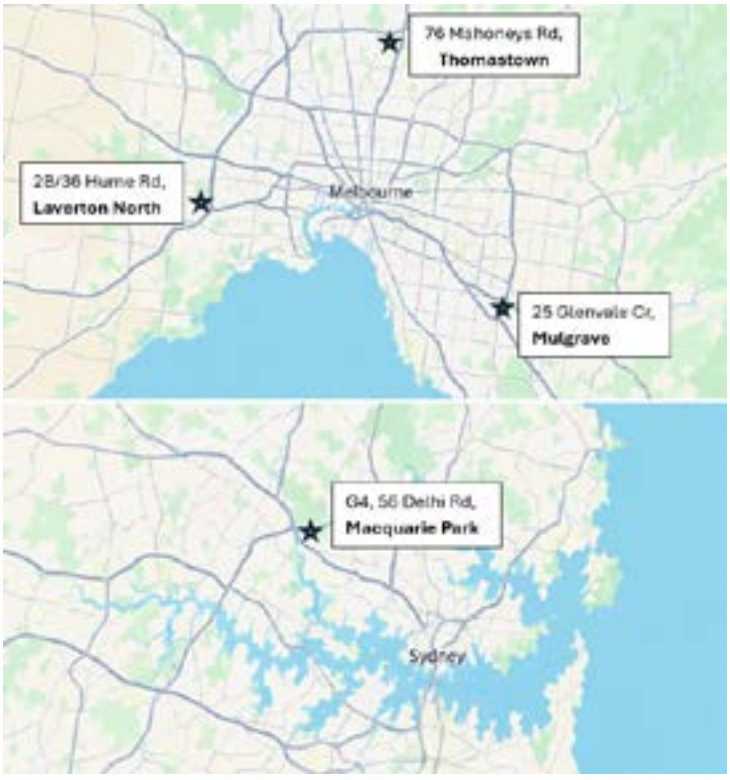
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Exercise is key!

Amputees and exercise – a match made in heaven!

Making exercise and stretching routines part of your lifestyle as an amputee can assist your longer-term outcomes and ability to keep moving and walking. There are so many health benefits of regular exercise for us all!

How will you benefit as an amputee?

- Prosthetic use requires more energy, (both physical and mental) whether you are a lower or upper limb amputee or multi-level amputee. Preparation and maintenance exercise is the KEY!
- Your remaining limb(s) will have to work harder whether you are using a prosthesis or a wheelchair.

So, regular exercise can assist lower limb amputees to:

- Have better strength, balance and agility to assist you with everyday tasks.
- Give you more confidence and help to prevent falls.
- To walk with less effort and to be more efficient with your walking.
- To help prevent and manage back pain and other joint pain.

If you don't continue strength-based exercise as you get older or at times when you are unwell, your muscles will get weaker, these changes will affect your ability to transfer, stand, balance and to walk with a prosthesis particularly if you are a higher-level amputee (e.g. above the knee).

If you're an upper limb amputee, you should also be maintaining your strength and fitness for similar health benefits. Maintaining your upper back and shoulder strength is important especially if you use an upper limb prosthesis. People who have had both upper and lower amputations require individualised programs based on their abilities.

Body health

- Better blood sugar control
- Weight management
- Improved heart and lung health
- Improved bone health

Movement and safety

- Improved strength, balance and agility
- Help prevent falls
- Help manage back and joint pain
- Support everyday mobility

Wellbeing

- Improved mood and brain health
- Improved sleep hygiene
- Help manage stress
- More confidence to stay active

What do the world health guidelines recommend for good health benefits for amputees, partners, friends and carers?

- Moderate intensity endurance exercise 150 mins / week or 75 mins/ week of vigorous activity/ week. This may include walking, arm bikes, wheelchair mobility, swimming and cycling (including hand cycling)
- Strength training 3 times per week. Working on key muscle groups, depending on your goals for mobility and activity
- Balance exercises for 20 minutes, 3 rimes per week

Physical activity guidelines

for adults with major lower limb amputation



These guidelines, based on the best available scientific evidence, were developed by a Canadian group of scientists, clinicians, people living with a lower limb amputation, and representatives of limb loss organizations.

These guidelines outline the minimum amount of activity needed to obtain health benefits for balance and mobility.

WHO are these guidelines for?

- Adults with **one-sided major amputation at the ankle and above**.
- People **living in an environment other than a hospital setting**, such as at home or in a community setting.

WHY should I use these guidelines?

To improve balance and overall daily mobility, including:

- **Walking endurance.**
- **Walking on uneven surfaces.**
- **Performing transfers and functional tasks,** such as:
  - Getting up from a chair or sofa
  - Picking up an object from the floor
  - Going up and down the stairs

Guidelines

For benefits in balance and mobility outcomes, adults with a major lower limb amputation should engage in:

Moderate to vigorous intensity aerobic exercises

60 minutes/ week

Aerobic

+

Strengthening exercises of the lower limbs

At least
3 sets of **10** repetitions
2 times per week

or

Balance exercises

At least
20 minutes
3 times per week

Positive outcomes that amputees can expect by exercising regularly



This is a recently published Canadian physical activity guideline for adults with major lower limb amputation. These are examples and we recommend that you seek guidance from your own healthcare professional.

Why are amputees more prone to getting tight muscles?

The evidence varies for a lot of conditions, but what we know about both upper and lower limb amputees is that you are more prone to developing contractures in your limbs because of the change in position of where the muscles are re-attached to the bone. The shortening of the muscles and having a shorter lever can then lead to tightness around the joints. This impacts the flexibility and range of motion in the joints.

Other factors can make you more at risk of getting short, tight muscles and contractures?

- If you spend time a lot of time resting in bed, or sitting for many hours during the day, your muscles will get tight, especially if you do not, or cannot change position.
- If you have a short residual limb e.g. less than the third the length of your sound side if you are a unilateral amputee.
- If you have a condition that makes you more prone to develop scar tissue or

medical conditions that cause the skin to become less flexible over your joints like Scleroderma, or if you have had skin or muscle grafts to your limb.

- People who have other medical problems that impact the control of the limb like stroke or spinal cord injury.

What happens if your muscles get tight and short?

For lower limb amputees:

- This will impact the setup of your prosthesis which then affects your walking pattern, safety and efficiency.
- For above knee amputees tight hip muscles (especially front of hip) can affect how your prosthetic knee operates.
- Can lead to pain in your stump inside your socket.
- Tight and weak ankle and calf muscles can impact the joint pressures in your sound foot, increasing your risk of foot ulcers and impacting your ability to step over obstacles safely, increasing your falls risk.
- Affects your ability to sit comfortably with your limb straight on a chair or the stump support, which can put more pressure on your sitting bones and cause pressure areas.

For upper limb amputees:

- Impacts your ability to maximise the function of your prosthesis
- Affects your ability to reach and perform everyday tasks using your limb
- Increased neck, upper and mid-back pain

How can you keep your joints flexible?

Perform daily stretches. For some, yoga may be a good option. Seek advice from your healthcare provider.

When not to stretch?

If you have new wounds on your limbs, have new joint pains or are advised by your clinician.



Exercises to help keep your stump strong and flexible for lower limb amputees

Hip extension

Lie on your stomach or stand supported if advised

Gently squeeze your bottom muscles and move the stump backwards

Keep your pelvis flat and avoid arching your back

Knee extension

For below-knee amputees, sit with the stump supported on a stool or pillow

Straighten the knee gently and tighten the thigh muscle

Avoid resting for long periods with the knee bent

Safety reminders

Move slowly and stop if you get pain

Check your stump skin before and after exercise

Seek advice from your healthcare provider if unsure

How can I become more physically active?

Make a physical activity plan that is **realistic** and **achievable** for you and **write it down**. Be sure to include details such as what activity you will do, when and where you will do it, for how long, and at what intensity.

Set **S.M.A.R.T.** goals for short and long-term: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, **T**ime-bound. **Have a look at your goals often and revise them if needed.**

Invite you family, friends, and peers and **encourage each other** to stick to the plan.

Try a **variety** of activities.



Do I need a health check?

Yes, if you have been medically unwell or haven't been participating in regular exercise recently. Review with your GP and then complete an assessment with your health care provider would be recommended prior to starting.

How to get started, who can best help with your program?

Have a conversation with your healthcare provider. These may include:

- A Physiotherapist
- An exercise physiologist
- Check with your prosthetist especially if your goal is heavy weight / power lifting, make sure the weight limits of your prosthetic componentry will match your program.

If you're a lower limb amputee, ensure you have the correct footwear especially if you are diabetic or have poor sensation in your residual foot.

Start with small amounts of physical activity.

- Gradually increase the duration, frequency and intensity to meet the recommended guidelines.
- Check your stump and foot regularly before and after exercise and act on any changes early with your GP.

Are there any risks I should be aware of while following these guidelines?

The potential health benefits of exercise outweigh the potential risks of not exercising at all.

How to stay motivated with your exercise program.

- Set simple goals: Make them clear, realistic and time-based. Review and adjust them as needed.
- Choose activities you enjoy: Try different options until you find something you want to keep doing.
- Fit movement into your day: Small amounts add up, such as sit-to-stands, stretching, regular standing or wheelchair movement.
- Schedule exercise: Put it in your diary or calendar and use phone reminders if helpful.
- Exercise with someone: A friend or exercise buddy can make activity more enjoyable and help you stay on track.
- Review your program: See your health professional regularly and update your exercises as your needs change.
- Know your reason: Understanding why each exercise matters can help you stay committed.
- Keep it interesting: Vary your exercises and activities to maintain motivation.

Key Messages from a recent study in the LANCET a well-known medical journal.

Small changes can make a difference. If you are not very active, adding just a few more minutes of movement each day is a good place to start. This could be as simple as adding 5 minutes of gentle or moderate activity, such as walking, wheeling or moving around your home.

You can also help your health by sitting for 30 minutes less each day, if this is safe and realistic for you.

- What did the study show? For people who were the least active:
- Adding 5 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity each day may reduce the risk of death by about 6%.
- Sitting 30 minutes less each day may prevent about 3% of deaths.

Across the wider population:

- Adding 5 extra minutes of activity each day may prevent about 10% of deaths.
- Sitting 30 minutes less each day may prevent about 7% of deaths.

Important: These small changes do not replace regular exercise. They simply show that every bit of movement can help.

Strength training. Why the right amount matters.

As we age, muscles naturally lose strength and power. This can make daily activities harder and increase the risk of falls. **After the age of 60, we lose approximately 3.6% of our strength each year. What does this mean for everyday movement?**

Standing from a chair	Effort needed
Young person	**About 42%** of their strength
Older adult	**About 80%** of their strength

TAKE HOME MESSAGES

Keep moving	Stretch daily, especially if your muscles are prone to becoming tight. **Even 5 extra minutes of movement each day can help.**
Get the right advice	Exercise needs vary depending on your goals, general health and daily life demands. Get professional advice to ensure you are completing the correct type and dose of exercise for the best outcomes.
Protect your mobility	If you are unwell or cannot stand and walk on your sound limb, your calf muscle may become tighter and affect your ability to stand and walk. **Aim to follow recommended strength, balance and endurance exercise guidelines so you can walk well, stay active and upright, or use your wheelchair independently.**
Foot and skin checks	If you have diabetes, ensure you have appropriate footwear and check your foot before and after exercise. Check your stump before and after exercise and dry the skin more often if you perspire a lot, especially in warmer weather.
Small changes matter	Recent research highlights that deaths can be averted by small changes in physical activity and sedentary time.

Helen Connor is one of Melbourne's leading physiotherapists with more than two decades of experience working with amputees.

We thank Diana Zidarov, pht, PhD for the use of their study | Dupuis F, Martin Ginis K, Mackay C, et al Infographic. Evidence-based physical activity guidelines for adults living with lower-limb amputation. British Journal of Sports Medicine 2026;60:748-749.

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Phillip's adapting, creating, and looking ahead

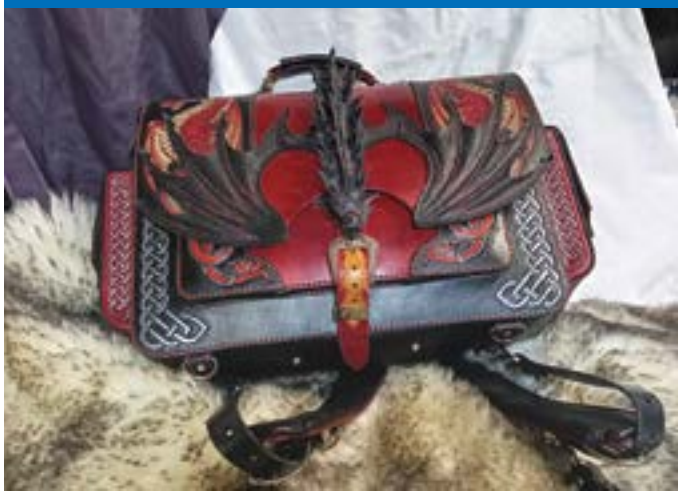


It took Phillip around 800 hours to make the suit of armour

My name is Phillip Bennett, I'm 41 years old, and I'm a left, below-elbow amputee, also living with Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) in my left lower leg. While these challenges have changed many aspects of my life, they have also taught me resilience, creativity, and the importance of finding new ways to do the things I love.

My family is at the centre of everything I do. My wife, Jayne, and our two daughters, Zoey (10) and Lucy (6), have been my greatest source of strength. They have supported me through the hardest times, and knowing they are always there for me has made it possible to keep moving forward. After graduating from high school, I spent 20 years working in retail management before my amputation. While that chapter of my life ended, it also opened the door to a new passion and career. Today, I run a small business creating bespoke leather goods, producing everything from small pouches and accessories to full suits of medieval armour.

The bag took Phillip 200 hours to create



Creativity has always been a big part of my life. I enjoy archery and all kinds of crafting, but leatherworking is by far my greatest passion. For the past six years, I have continued leatherworking using just one hand, adapting my techniques, and designing specialised tools which allow me to work independently. One of my favourite creations is a custom mallet that clips directly into my prosthetic, making it easier to complete detailed leatherwork with precision.





Looking to the future, I hope to combine my passion for craftsmanship with my love of creativity by working in the film and television industry, designing and creating costumes and props. At the same time, I would love to grow my leathercraft business into a full-time career. **My advice to other amputees is simple: don't give up.** There are ways to adapt and overcome so that you can continue doing the things that bring you joy. It may not be the same way you did them before, but with persistence and a willingness to adapt, you'll often find a new path forward. Surround yourself with people who support you, encourage you, and never judge you for the things you love. Those people can make all the difference, and with determination, there is no limit to what you can achieve.



Some of Phillip's self-designed, 3D printed tools



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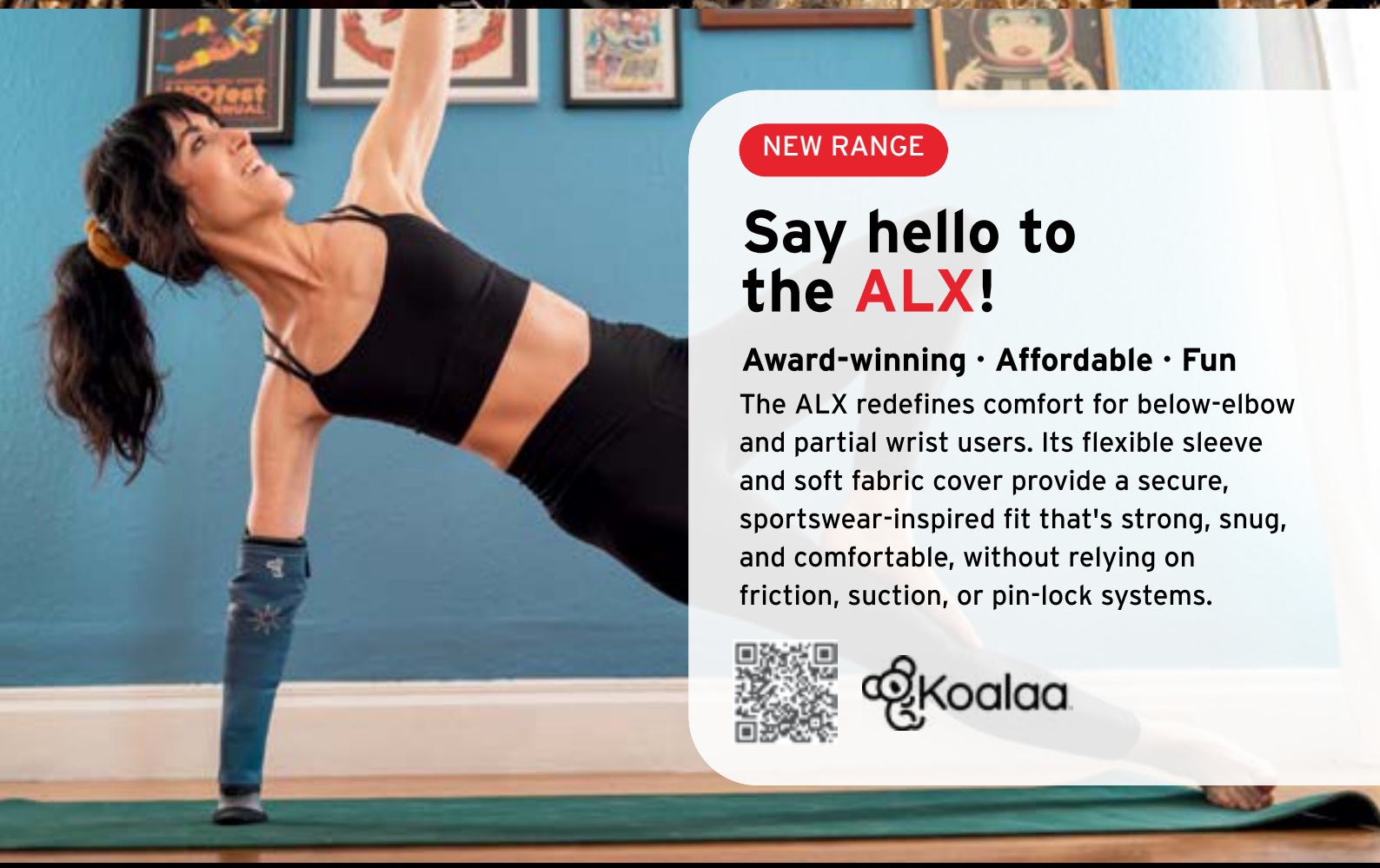
I've been using the Hero RGD from sun-up to sun-down for tasks around the farm.

Whether it's scooping things out of bunks, shovelling straw, carrying buckets of grain, of working with water.

I love that I don't have to switch prosthetics, this hand does all, lift heavy, waterproof, solid grip.

Conor
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Zoe's Journey:

VIRTETIC

Finding My Strength with Myo-Hand XP

How virtual reality and clinical support empowered Zoe to discover her strength and secure NDIS funding.

Zoe's Journey

I'm Zoe, 44 years old, born missing my left hand at birth, likely due to amniotic band syndrome. I never felt disabled, just different. For years I hid it, adapting to everything from raising kids to my career in aged care. But decades of overcompensating took their toll, leaving me with daily pain and fatigue. Facing aging, menopause, and maintaining my independence, I knew I needed to revisit prosthetics.

My initial NDIS application was declined, they claimed my lifelong condition wasn't a "significant" impairment. It was a classic, frustrating setback: being dismissed because you've become an expert at hiding the struggle.

The Core Vision

Navigating the NDIS with a congenital limb difference can feel like an uphill battle, especially when you've spent a lifetime "just getting on with it." For many, early intervention isn't just a clinical term; it's about protecting the body from the years of overcompensation that eventually catch up.

Securing support requires more than just sharing personal stories; it requires objective evidence to prove functional potential. By combining personal advocacy with the right technology and clinical guidance, it is possible to turn a "no" into a life-changing "yes."

I got in contact with my prosthetist, *Kris, at Barwon Prosthetics and Orthotics*, to discuss my options going forward.

The Clinician's Perspective

Prosthetist - Barwon Prosthetics and Orthotics

Kris: When Zoe approached us after her initial NDIS application was rejected, we had to help her build an undeniable case. The agency's assessment overlooked the functional limitations as a result of her upper limb difference and how a prosthesis and therapy could improve independence. Because she was already dealing with chronic neck and shoulder pain, traditional body-powered harnesses weren't feasible. We needed to prove her capability with a myoelectric prosthesis while reducing strain on her body.

We paired ***Virtetic's Myo-Hand XP*** with ***Ottobock's myosmart system*** to create virtual prosthesis **tailored** to her arm. Myo-Hand XP is a virtual reality (VR) system that provides an engaging starting point to train muscles that may have been dormant for a lifetime and learn how to functionally use a prosthesis.



Why Myo-Hand XP?

Kris: The system functions by tapping directly into phantom limb sensations. By imagining the motion of opening and closing the hand, consistent muscle signals are generated in the forearm, reactivating muscles that may have been previously dormant.

The myosmart system detects these signals and transmits them to Myo-Hand XP, translating those subtle twitches into virtual actions. This seamless connection provides immediate visual feedback, enabling the refinement of control and the development of muscle memory with each movement.

Following an initial clinical training session and a personalized setup, the system is ready for Zoe to undertake an at-home trial.

Zoe's Experience

Training from my living room, I used targeted VR games to build my gripping skills in a fun, low-pressure way while the app mapped my muscle movement and automatically tracked my progress, reaction times, and control.



Real Impact

VR transformed my perspective on what my body could achieve, allowing me to lift, grab, and move objects in ways I never had before. Backed by ongoing support from the Virtetic team to navigate the technology, I rapidly built control and confidence.

> ***For the first time in my life, I was able to experience what it felt like to have two hands and see what could be possible... I am moving toward real-world trials, feeling empowered and prepared for a future where I can maintain my independence."*** *- Zoe*

VR transformed my perspective on what my body could achieve, allowing me to lift, grab, and move objects in ways I never had before. Backed by ongoing support from the Virtetic team to navigate the technology, I rapidly built control and confidence.

By pairing my at-home training data with an occupational therapist's functional assessment and Kris's clinical oversight, this united team effort provided the compelling proof needed to overturn the decision and grant me NDIS access.

Special thanks to Ottobock for supporting Zoe's journey by providing the myosmart system.

Ready to Elevate Your Training?

Talk to Your Prosthetist

Ask about integrating Virtetic into your current care plan.

Contact the Virtetic Team

Get in touch directly to learn more about the Myo-Hand XP.



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100%
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Contact us!

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Why a good prosthetic socket fit matters

For people living with limb loss, a well-fitting prosthetic socket can make a significant difference to comfort, mobility, confidence and everyday independence. Whether you use a lower or upper limb prosthesis, getting the socket fit right is an essential part of your prosthetic journey.

Achieving the right fit takes time, patience and communication with your prosthetist. Your socket should feel secure without being too tight or too loose. Areas of excessive pressure, rubbing, discomfort or pain should never be ignored, as they can affect how comfortably and confidently you use your prosthesis.

Make the most of your fitting appointment. When trying a test socket, allow enough time to assess how it feels and performs. Take note of any areas that cause discomfort, pressure or pain. You may find it helpful to write down your observations or, with your prosthetist's guidance, mark the problem areas on the test socket. This information can help your prosthetist identify where adjustments may be needed.

For lower limb amputees, socket fit can influence walking ability, balance and the confidence to participate in everyday activities. For upper limb amputees, comfort and fit are equally important, helping you use your prosthesis as effectively as possible.

Remember, **you are an important part of the fitting process.** Your feedback matters because you are the person who will be wearing and relying on your prosthesis. Speak up if something does not feel right, and work with your prosthetist to address any concerns. Like any assistive device, your prosthesis needs to be 'fit for purpose'. If your socket is uncomfortable, painful or preventing you from doing the things you need or want to do, contact your prosthetic provider and discuss the available options for assessment and adjustment.

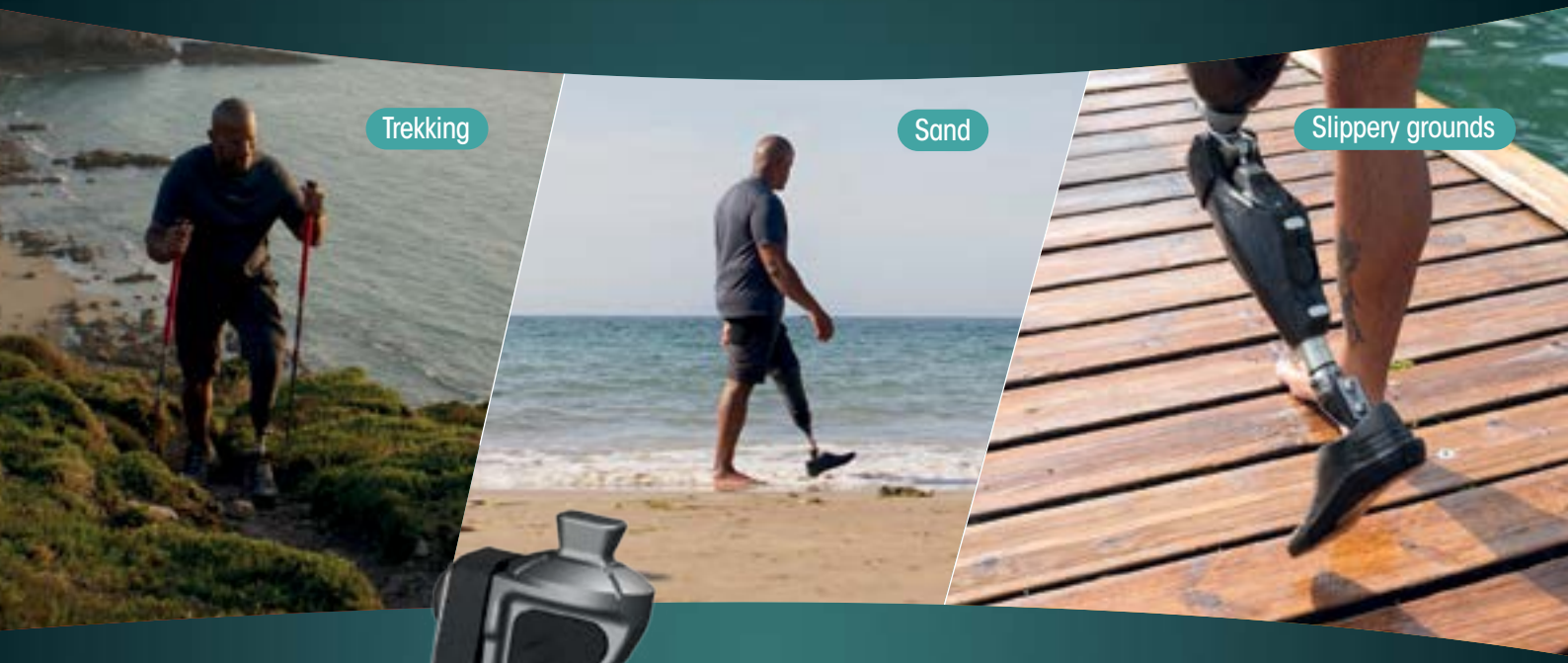
A comfortable, well-fitting socket is more than just a good fit. It can help you get the most out of your prosthesis and support you to live life with greater comfort, confidence and independence.

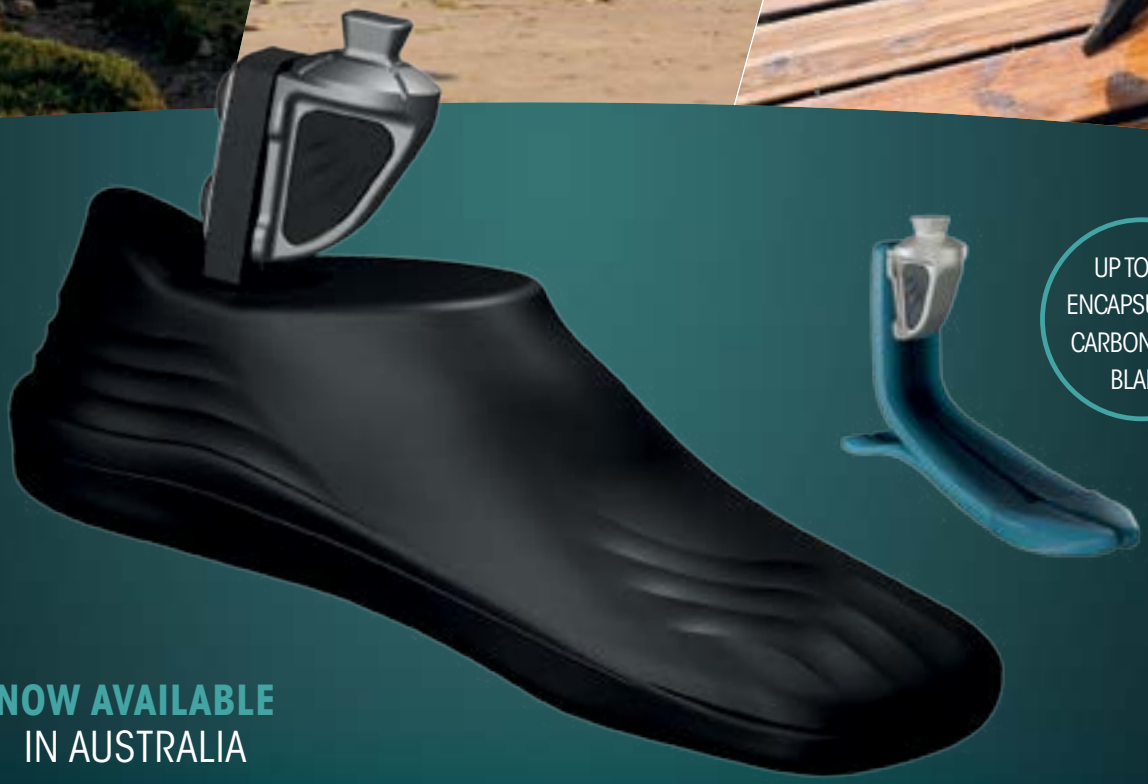


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Bernie is back on the bike and aiming for Finke Desert Race 2027

Five years ago, Darwin's Bernie Dunn was 16 when a taxi reversing out of a driveway hit him on his motorbike, with the full impact falling on his left leg. He lost the leg above the knee. A keen road and mountain bike racer, including at Junior Road Nationals and Easter in Alice, he found cycling just wasn't the same afterwards.

But losing his leg was never going to stop him. Motorbikes quickly became his new obsession, and Bernie first had to relearn to ride as an above-knee amputee to get his licence back. He worked with local business, Bike You Darwin, to figure out the modifications and techniques needed to control a motorbike. He rides with a Biodapt MotoKnee, a prosthetic built for high-impact sport, and a handlebar-mounted electric button shifter, since he can't change gears with his prosthetic leg. For his track bike, he has also fitted a bike cleat to help keep his foot on the peg, and he is still searching for a more reliable setup.

That journey led him to gain his coaching qualifications and, more recently, to race track, and dirt bikes. In his first major motorcycle competition, the Terra NT TTC, he came away with an incredible 2nd place!

Today, the 21-year-old is employed by Bike You Darwin, as a coach and mechanic, teaching



both able-bodied riders and people with disabilities to ride. He is also a Limbs 4 Life Peer Support Volunteer, currently supporting two men who recently became amputees, with the plan to get them back onto motorbikes when they are ready.

His next goal is the 2027 Finke Desert Race, one of the toughest motorbike races in Australia. As far as he can tell, no rider with an above-knee amputation has done it before. Bernie is now looking for sponsors to help fund his journey and be a part of it. Along the way, he wants to raise awareness of adaptive motorsport, support the NT amputee community and promote road safety.

If you would like to support a determined young rider chasing a big dream, contact Limbs 4 Life.





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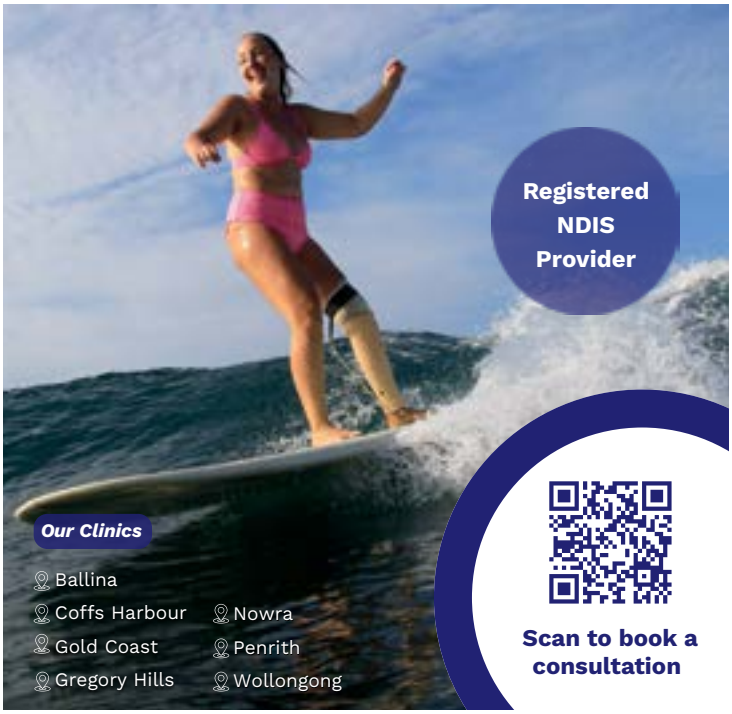
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NDIS changes – are you ready?

For those of you who receive funding from the National Disabilty Insurance Scheme (NDIS), some major changes came into effect on October 1 this year.

These changes are part of the new NDIS laws and will reduce participant budgets for two support categories:

- **Social, economic and community participation:** Core budget allocations are being reduced by 50%
- **Improved daily living skills:** Capacity building daily activity allocations are being reduced by 10%

The impacts of this change will be different for every participant because every NDIS plan is based on individual goals, circumstances and support needs.

The NDIS are also giving more consideration to spending. For example, if you request a 'power (wheel) chair', then the agency may question why you also need a complex prosthetic device. As a new amputee it can be difficult to determine what all of your needs maybe now, and in 6 months time; your needs could change as your recover, and your needs may look very different. Ask questions, speak to your therapists, providers and maybe consider chatting to another amputee.









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Still his mama.
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own person.
THROUGH
the
ASHES
COLE

Christina A. Cole resides in the USA. Her amputation journey inspired her to author, 'Through the Ashes.'

The hospital saved my life. Learning how to live in my changed body became another kind of work.

In 2023, septic shock led to cardiac arrest, bilateral trans metatarsal amputations (partial foot), and the loss of several fingertips. After eighteen surgeries in three years, recovery still shapes my days. But so does being a mother.

My son, Lucas, needs his mum. I want to be present for his ordinary moments, even when our days must be organised around appointments, pain, or how much energy I have left. Motherhood has not disappeared beneath my medical history. It is one of the reasons I keep asking how life can become more manageable.

I am an ambulatory wheelchair user. Being able to walk sometimes does not mean I can stand for long or manage every distance. What someone sees in a brief encounter cannot tell them what movement costs me, or how much recovery follows it.

That gap between appearance and reality makes self-advocacy essential. I need people to hear what I am telling them about my body, even when it does not match their assumptions. I have also learned that surviving a hospital stay and understanding what comes next are different things. Patients need clear explanations, room for questions, and support that continues after discharge. We should not have to become experts overnight to participate in our own care.

Through my writing and patient advocacy, I want to make those needs harder to overlook. My experience is personal, but the need to be heard crosses borders.

For anyone parenting while adjusting to limb loss: your worth is not measured by how much you can do on your feet. Accepting help and using mobility aids can create more room for connection.



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Prosthetic care is about more than the device — it's about what it makes possible. Whether it's returning to a favourite sport, exploring new passions or enjoying the everyday moments that matter, our goal is to help every client pursue what they love and make the most of life on their own terms.









Come meet the team

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Limbs 4 Life volunteers, we thank you!

Limbs 4 Life relies heavily on the support and assistance from all of our volunteers. Our peer support volunteers provide early intervention support to people prior to, or just following amputation. In fact our amputee volunteers have a wealth of lived experience and daily living tips.

For those of you who have ever attended one of the local support group gatherings, then you would have been welcomed by our volunteer host/s – support group leaders. Our leaders are also trained peer supporters who generously give of their time to support and assist others in the community.

Behind the scenes some of our community are members of the National Amputee Advisory Council.

Finally, our board. As a non-profit charity, Limbs 4 Life could not function without the board directors who provide governance oversight to ensure that the organisation is operating ethically and in line with Limbs 4 Life's constitution. To all of you who give of your time, thank you, Limbs 4 Life would be unable to serve the Australian amputee community without your unwavering support.



Get Active, Stay Active: Moving Your Way

Being an amputee doesn't mean putting your active lifestyle on hold. Whether you enjoy walking, swimming, cycling, playing sport or simply getting outdoors in the garden, staying active can make a positive difference to your physical health, confidence and overall wellbeing.

Physical activity doesn't have to mean running a marathon or joining a gym. It's about finding something you enjoy and taking small steps towards your goals. Every movement counts! Getting active can also be a wonderful way to connect with others, build friendships and discover new opportunities. Joining a local support group, trying an adaptive sport or exercising with friends can make the journey more enjoyable.

Everyone's abilities and circumstances are different, so start at your own pace and celebrate your progress. If you're unsure where to begin, speak with your healthcare professional or physiotherapist for advice.

Remember, your amputation doesn't define your potential. Find what moves you, take that first step and keep moving forward!





Join us!

Whether you're seeking support, advice, or a friendly face, our community is here. We regularly meet for social events, casual rounds of golf, and workshops. Your friends and family are always welcome to join, and together, we can explore how golf can fit into your rehabilitation journey

If you're interested in learning more or attending an event, get in touch today.

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