



Fact Sheet #09

Regaining your independence



Limbs 4 Life™
Empowering Amputees

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

This Fact Sheet looks at some of the things to think about after leaving hospital, adjusting to life back in your own community.

How to get around and use transportation?

How you will get from place to place, either on your own or with carers, is an important part of regaining your independence.

Cars and motorbikes:

Many amputees are able to return to driving after limb loss. Cars, motorbikes and even some trucks can be modified to enable you to safely drive again (e.g. hand controls can be installed or the accelerator pedal can be moved to the left-hand side). In some cases you may need to re-sit a licence test. Your Occupational Therapist can assist you to find a company that can modify your car and/or prepare you for a driving test.

If you will not be driving yourself you should also think about getting in and out of other people's cars, how easy or hard this is for you, whether you need help, whether a wheelchair will fit into and out of the car.

Taxis:

You may be eligible for a Taxi Concession Card. For more information contact the Taxi Directorate in your state or territory.

Parking:

Consider whether you might need a disabled parking permit to help you to park closer to building entries and exits. You are eligible for a disabled parking permit if you have a significant permanent ambulatory (walking) disability; a disability that is not likely to improve. Your Social Worker can assist you with this process. You will need the application form signed by a Doctor.

Public Transport:

If you prefer to use public transport, consider how you will get on and off the mode you use. Are there

steps or ramps to allow for easy access? Can you hold on to something if you need to stand up and/or if there is not a seat available? Which is the best form of transport to use if you are using a wheelchair? Visit the public transport authority in your state or territory to find out more and consider making your first trips on public transport with a friend or carer.

Aeroplanes:

When travelling on an aeroplane with your prosthesis consider:

- Whether you require assistance with your luggage and/or carry-on bag.
- If you are wearing a prosthesis you will automatically set off the security screening system, so be prepared to have a body scan/pat search.
- Whether you require assistance getting to the gate lounge.
- Whether you can comfortably and safely walk on and off the plane or if need wheelchair assistance or someone to help.
- Whether you can walk up and down stairs if an aerobridge is not available. If an aerobridge is not available the airline can assist you on to the aircraft via other means (such as a lift).
- Always carrying additional stump socks and/or a clean liner with you in your carry-on baggage, as well as any lotions or gels you may need.

Shopping:

It's a good idea to think about how you will do your shopping. Consider how you will get to and from the supermarket and/or shops.

You may like to consider:

- Shopping online and having your items delivered.
- Find out if your local council provides shopping assistance.
- Considering using a backpack to carry your things so that your hands are free if you need to use a walking aid.
- If you can walk to your local shops, perhaps consider buying your own trolley (with wheels).

What's stopping you?

Is there anything else you did before your amputation that is really hard now? Or is there anything that bothers you and stops you from doing what you want to do? If there are things that you want to do, speak to people and organisations that can assist you.