

# FACT SHEET: PROSTHETICS



The main objective of a prosthesis is to replace the body part that has been lost and return functionality and mobility.

## Which prosthesis is right for me?

When deciding which kind of prosthesis is best for you there are several things to consider, this can include:

- Types of activities you do or would like to do.
- How comfortable you are with new ideas.
- The condition of your residual limb (stump).
- Any health issues you have and your ability to look after yourself and manage your healthcare.
- What you need to use the prosthesis for e.g. your job, walking and getting around the community, playing with your children, accessing wet areas safely, using a specific kind of tool for your job/leisure activity, general function.



**Limbs 4 Life**<sup>™</sup>  
Empowering Amputees



## The right kind of prosthesis can help you to achieve your goals.

### How can a lower limb prosthesis help my mobility and independence?

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

- 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 other gait 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 a gait 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.

Componentry manufacturers often rate their components (like feet, knees etc) according to these 'K classes' or mobility grades. This is why your prosthetist will ask you about your activities, so they can choose componentry that is safe and effective for your lifestyle.



### How can an upper limb prosthesis help with my functionality?

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: working around the home, riding a bike or doing a particular activity. An upper limb prosthesis can help with:

- Gripping and holding objects
- Correcting posture
- Restoring the appearance of the limb
- Fine motor use

### Can I trial a prosthetic component?

One of the best ways to work out if a type of prosthesis is right for you is to try it out first. Did you know that you can trial different kinds of Assistive Technology? It might be useful asking your prosthetic provider if you can trial different feet, knees or hands before selecting the right prosthetic device for you.

For more information and to request Peer Support call **1300 78 2231** or visit [limbs4life.org.au](http://limbs4life.org.au).

**Whether you wear an upper or lower limb prosthesis, it should never cause you pain. If your prosthesis is causing you pain, or if you do not feel safe using your prosthesis you should make an appointment to see your prosthetic clinician immediately.**