

About Your New Lower Limb Prosthesis

The Orthotic & Prosthetic Centers

Your new lower limb prosthesis will replace the part of your lower limb that has been amputated. The information below – along with the specific guidance of your physician and orthotist – will tell you what to expect when using your LLP, and how to properly wear, maintain and care for the prosthesis.

Follow your health care providers' instructions carefully to use this device safely and effectively; this document is intended to give you general "getting started" instructions. For example, your prosthesis may use a shuttle lock suction socket, or a silicone or gel liner. While this document addresses some of those issues, your prosthetist will deliver specific instructions related to special cases.

Wearing your Lower Limb Prosthesis

DO NOT wear your LLP to bed. Remove it before napping or going to bed at night.

The first day.

Every 1 to 1 ½ hours, remove your prosthesis to inspect your residual limb. Red areas should disappear within 15 to 30 minutes; they are simply your limb's reaction to the pressure of your LLP. If they do not disappear or you notice swelling, discoloration or blistering, call our office and stop using your prosthesis immediately.

Expect your limb to change.

Your residual limb may shrink a great deal if your limb was recently amputated; this is part of the post-surgery healing. Your residual limb will continue to change as muscles adjust, or as you gain or lose weight.

How to maintain proper fit.

As your residual limb changes, you will need to add or remove prosthetic socks to adjust the fit of your LLP. If you are wearing a prosthetic sock and the socket feels a little loose, simply add more socks of varying thickness: 3-ply, 5-ply and 6-ply are most common. It is better to wear a thicker sock than many thin socks; this avoids wrinkles that can irritate or injure your skin. If problems with fit or irritation persist, consult your prosthetist immediately.

Maintaining your Residual Limb and Prosthesis

Wash your residual limb each day with mild soap and warm water to prevent skin irritations and infection.

If you wear a prosthetic sock, clean the inside of your prosthetic socket at least once a week with rubbing alcohol splashed on a washcloth. Clean the prosthetic socket daily if you wear your LLP with no sock, directly against the skin.

Please contact us if you have any questions.

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If you wear prosthetic socks with your LLP, wash them every day with mild soap and water. Be sure to rotate through all of your socks to assure even wear and allow time for the sock fibers to return to their original state.

If your prosthesis has a prosthetic skin, clean the surface as needed it with an all-purpose spray cleaner.

Risks & Precautions

Continue to check your residual limb daily for redness, blisters, soreness, or swelling. Stop using your LLP immediately if you see these symptoms, and call our office.

If you feel any new or uncomfortable pressures on your residual limb, and adjusting the sock ply does not help, call your prosthetist – particularly if the pressure is on the bottom of your residual limb or above the bone in front of your limb.

Don't worry if the shuttle lock fails to release; a loose sock thread may be trapped in the mechanism. Gently and methodically try to remove the thread. If the button is hard to push, stand up and put your weight on the prosthesis. Push down hard and then sit down. Never attempt to pull the insert out before pressing in the lock button.

If you experience a hard fall, call us immediately. We will examine your prosthesis, and if necessary, repair it. This is important to keep you safe and your prosthesis fully functional. DO NOT try to adjust, repair, or alter your prosthesis in any way. The safety and effectiveness of your prosthesis depends upon the careful fitting, design and fabrication by a team of experts. Leave any adjustments to a qualified medical professional.

Follow-up care and emergencies

Follow-up visits with your fitter are vital for your healing – don't skip any scheduled appointments. Call our office with any questions or problems. If you have trouble breathing, severe limb pain, high fever, or absence of color in the residual limb, call 911 or your local hospital.

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