

Lower Extremity Prosthetic Care Guide

Your New Prosthesis

To obtain the best results from your new prosthesis, it is recommended that you start by wearing it on a gradually increasing basis unless you have been instructed otherwise.

Confer with your doctor, therapist, and prosthetist to determine the best time frame for you.

Notify our office at once if any redness indicating pressure marks lasts longer than approximately 20 to 30 minutes, particularly during this introductory period. Should you experience pain, other than the normal pressure of wearing a prosthesis, discontinue wearing the prosthesis or shrinker and call immediately to schedule an appointment.

Hygiene

Daily washing of your residual limb is important. It is also advisable to wipe the inside of the prosthetic socket daily with a clean, damp cloth. The limb, socket, liner, and socks should all be completely dry before redonning. Follow manufacturer directions regarding care and maintenance of gel liner.

Heel Heights

Your prosthesis was designed for wear with shoes of a specific heel height. Heels that are higher or lower will alter prosthetic alignment and may cause stability problems. Always check with your prosthetist before switching heel heights to ensure proper function and comfort. Remember that your prosthesis should always be worn with shoes. If you want to wear shoes of various heel heights, make sure to mention that to your prosthetist.

Prosthetic Socks

The prosthetic socks you receive with both your temporary and definitive prostheses are an integral part of proper fit and comfort. Adjusting the number and ply of socks worn, and proper care of your prosthetic socks can make the difference between wearing the prosthesis properly or developing irritations.

Ply

Prosthetic socks come in a variety of materials, sizes, and thicknesses, ranging from one through eight. Characteristics of various plies include:

ONE PLY: Often called "cast or fitting socks," these are the thinnest socks (though not as thin as a sheath), and are usually made of cotton.

MULTI-PLY: This sock is made of wool, wool blend, synthetics, or cotton, and is approximately equal to the number of single ply socks indicated on the label.

Your prosthetist will inform you of the proper ply you are to wear.

Ply Changes

Different ply socks are provided to control residual limb volume fluctuations which can occur daily, or even from morning to night.

The following is a guide to ply changes relative to volume gain and loss:

VOLUME GAIN

Possible Causes

- Overall body weight gain
- Heat
- Blood pressure
- Fluid retention
- Medication changes
- Decreased activity/Increased appetite
- Decrease in wearing time of prosthesis and/or shrinker
- Dermatitis

Potential Problems

- Leg feels too tight with sock or socks worn
- Improper fitting socket
- Pressure resulting in discomfort in new areas
- Pinching
- Leg seems taller
- Back pain
- Discomfort

Solutions — Ply Change

Decrease sock ply for volume gain.

See Prosthetist

VOLUME LOSS

Possible Causes

- Diuretics (such as blood pressure medication)
- Cold
- Increased activity
- Longer wearing time
- Overall body weight loss

Potential Problems

- Leg feels loose
- Pistoning (slipping of socket while walking)
- Greater pressure on bony areas
- Discomfort
- Leg seems shorter
- Back pain

Solutions — Ply Change

Increase sock ply for volume loss.

See Prosthetist

Adjusting For A Better Fit

As you get accustomed to wearing your prosthesis, you will notice some fluctuation in the volume of your limb. In the case of slight swelling, generally in the morning, decrease your sock ply. To decrease the number of ply, start by subtracting one thickness at a time. **EXAMPLE:** If you are wearing a 3 ply sock, remove it and put on two 1 ply socks to reduce volume by one ply.

Continue until you fit into the socket comfortably without the limb feeling loose. Keep several ply with you at all times since you may need to add thickness during the day as your limb volume decreases. Additional ply will ensure a secure and comfortable fit.

To increase the number of ply, start by adding one thickness at a time. **EXAMPLE:** You are wearing 4 ply (a 3 ply and a 1 ply); remove those and put on a 5 ply sock. Continue until it seems that your residual limb is resting in the proper areas.

Wearing Your New Prosthesis

Donning A Below Knee Prosthesis

- Put on gel liner
- Put on prosthetic sock(s)
- Put on prosthesis

Donning An Above Knee Prosthesis

- Put on gel liner
- Put on prosthesis

Donning A Suction Socket Prosthesis

- Put on pull sock
- Push downward into prosthesis, remove pull sock completely, as shown by the prosthetist
- Replace valve
- Press weight down into prosthesis while setting valve to release air, or adjusting lock mechanism on a silicone/gel suction socket.

Follow-up Care Schedule

During the first year, regular follow-up visits are scheduled periodically. After that, maintenance and function checkups are usually made annually.

Atypical schedule is: _____

• Approximately one month from date of delivery. Your visit will be: _____

• Third Month: _____

• Sixth Month: _____

• Annual Visits: _____

Date issued: _____

Your Prosthetist is: _____

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