

Residual Limb Care

Wash the residual limb daily with soap and water, rinse and dry carefully. Do not soak as this makes the skin tender. Whenever you have a shower or bath, make sure your residual limb is thoroughly dry before you put on your prosthesis.

If perspiring excessively during the day, remove socket and pat residual limb dry. If required an anti-perspirant may be prescribed; however these should be used with caution and exactly as prescribed. If excessive perspiration causes discomfort, discuss this with the doctor in charge of your amputee clinic.

Do not shave the residual limb or apply lotions or moisturisers to your residual limb.

Check the fitting and make sure that there are no pressure points. Examine the residual limb when the prosthesis is removed each night, for areas of excessive redness, irritation, swelling or skin breakdown. If redness, irritation, blistering or swelling persists, stop wearing your prosthesis immediately and see your medical practitioner, prosthetist, or amputee clinic within 48 hours.

To prevent swelling while waiting for a breakdown to heal, a shrinker sock should be used on the residual limb or an elasticised bandage applied only as directed. Do not use band-aids or similar coverings as this discourages healing. Report any problems to your amputee clinic.

Any changes in your body weight will alter the fit of the prosthesis. If for some reason you lose or gain weight, report this immediately to your prosthetist, clinic or medical practitioner.

Prosthesis Care

A prosthesis is a mechanical device and as such requires regular maintenance and care. If there is any unusual sign (visible, audible or functional) it should be inspected by a prosthetist as soon as possible.

The prosthesis is designed for use in normal conditions and environments. It has not been designed for use in:

- Wet environments
- Activities that will include unusually high impacts
- Chemical environments that may alter the structural integrity of the prosthesis.

The socket

For optimum function of your prosthesis, daily cleaning of the interior of the socket is required. Clean with a sponge or soft cloth and a little mild soap. Inaccessible points can be reached with an old toothbrush. Push towelling in to dry inside. Leave to dry thoroughly overnight. Clean the exterior in a similar way when necessary.

Limb socks

Are indicated for protection of the skin, for greater comfort and to absorb perspiration. Change daily and wash by hand with mild soap (not detergent) and water. Any soap left in the sock may irritate the skin. The sock must fit snugly, without wrinkles, to avoid pressure points on the residual limb.

Silicone socks/ liners

Avoid contact with ball point pens, newsprint, vegetable dyes etc which will leave a permanent stain. Follow manufacturers' instructions for cleaning (this differs for manufacturers). If the silicone liner is of the type that has an attachment or locking mechanism at the bottom or distal end, regularly inspect attachment points for signs of wear and tear. See your prosthetist if the attachment looks worn.

Leather parts

Keep clean and dry. Use saddle soap to clean any leather parts.

Webbing

Wash straps with soap and warm water.

Valves in suction socket

Clean the base of the valve and the opening into the socket with a soft brush to remove any accumulation of powder or other substance. The valve is very important to the functioning of the prosthesis particularly if it is the only mechanism providing the suspension of the prosthesis. The valve may function incorrectly if it fills with talc or other substances. It needs to always be secured properly in its outer housing and if it has a button, this should work positively. Your prosthetist should show you how to check that your valve is secured properly, how it can be cleaned and what is acceptable in terms of air leaking through the valve.

If the valve has poor function, see your prosthetist.

Mechanical parts / components

1. A frequent maintenance check-up with your prosthetist is essential for maintenance and

optimal function.

2. Do not adjust screws, hinges or other parts of your prosthesis yourself.
3. Any excessive noise or grating during use should be reported to your prosthetist.
4. Any dust (often black) should be reported to your prosthetist.
5. Where prosthesis is fitted with an hydraulic knee joint, store in upright position only.

Arm Prosthesis

1. Terminal Device

- a) Split hook. Apply an occasional drop of very light machine oil on the hinged bearing of the hook. Any sign of wear should be reported to your prosthetist or occupational therapist. Rubber bands - renew frequently, they are not effective when perished.
- b) Cosmetic hand. Wash the outer glove with mild soap and water. (Cover the glove when reading a newspaper).

2. The Cable

Report to your prosthetist if it is worn, bent or frayed so that it can be replaced.

3. Storage

Lie the prosthesis flat, do not hang by cable or harness.

Clothing

For the upper limb, a T-shirt should be worn under the harness to protect the skin from chafing by the harness and axilla loop. For the lower limb, the height of shoes must be identical. Have your shoes repaired when worn.

**See a prosthetist
Do not attempt to repair your
prosthesis yourself.**

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