

DANKMEYER

PROSTHETICS & ORTHOTICS

CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR DEFINITIVE BELOW KNEE PROSTHESIS (Trans-Tibial)

The goal of the break in schedule is to transition from wearing your older prosthesis into wearing your new prosthesis. It is important to increase wearing time in regular incremental amounts in order to prevent any skin breakdown.

SKIN CHECK

It is important to maintain close observation of your skin. A skin check should be performed each time you remove your prosthesis.

When inspecting your skin, look for reddened areas or marks (PARTICULARLY ON YOUR KNEE CAP AND YOUR SHIN). There will probably be areas of redness, but they should disappear within 20 minutes. These areas are a result from pressures placed on your skin by the prosthesis.

If there are any areas that remain red longer than 30 minutes, **DO NOT WEAR YOUR PROSTHESIS FOR THE REST OF THE DAY!** Start again the following day with your last completed wear time. If the redness returns or you develop skin breakdown (a blister or abrasion), **DO NOT WEAR YOUR PROSTHESIS.** You should contact your **prosthetist** and schedule an appointment.

BREAK-IN SCHEDULE

The period of time it will take to break in your new prosthesis will be much shorter than when you received your first prosthesis. Your residual limb is already accustomed to socket pressures, however, your limb does need time to adjust to the fit of the new socket. The transition from your older prosthesis to the new prosthesis usually takes about 1 – 2 weeks. The amount of time it will take you to reach your normal wearing schedule is different for each person. Your prosthetist will determine the best schedule for you. Keeping a close watch on your skin and following your break-in schedule will allow you to quickly adjust to your new prosthesis.

MAIN OFFICE: 1-800-879-1245

CUMBERLAND OFFICE: 301-777-7086 • EASTON OFFICE: 410-822-7599 • SINAI OFFICE: 410-5542-6500

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CHANGES IN YOUR RESIDUAL LIMB

It is common for amputees to experience changes in their residual limbs up to 3 – 5 years after the initial amputation. Majority of the changes will occur with the first prosthesis. These changes are generally due to continued muscle and tissue atrophy. Since the socket will not change in size, it is important for you to adjust the fit with your prosthetic socks.

There are other circumstances which will have an effect on the shape of your limb and the fit of your prosthesis. A few examples are: weight gain/loss of 10 pounds or more, medication, dialysis and pregnancy. Any concerns should be immediately addressed with your prosthetist.

Your prosthesis was custom fabricated to your limb's shape at the time of casting. It is important for you to maintain your weight, unless advised by your physician.

MANAGING YOUR PROSTHETIC SOCKS

It is very important for you to manage your prosthetic socks correctly. More problems are caused by having on the wrong number of socks than for any other reason. You alone are the best manager of your socks. You should not rely on your family or friends to put on the right number of socks for you. Only you can decide if it feels like you are wearing the right number of socks.

WHEN TO ADD SOCKS

Since the prosthesis does not shrink along with your residual limb, you must use socks to "fill up" the space left by the shrinkage. You will know when you need to add a ply of sock when you feel one of the following **Warning Signs**:

- You may feel the socket (bar) pushing up under your knee cap.
- There is a red mark on your knee cap from the prosthesis.
- You may feel the end of your residual limb hit the bottom of the socket.
- The end of your residual limb feels loose or it feels like it "bangs" back and forth in the bottom of the socket.
- The prosthesis may feel short.

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***When you feel any Warning Signs, you should immediately stop what you are doing and put on another ply of sock. Add only one ply of sock at a time.**

WHEN TO SUBTRACT SOCKS

Sometimes your residual limb may swell a little and you may need to wear less ply of socks. Factors that affect swelling include: not wearing your shrinker, gaining weight, dialysis and medication changes. You know you need to remove a ply of sock when you feel one of the following **Warning Signs**:

- You may feel pressure from the “bar” in the socket on your shin bone.
- The end of your residual limb is not touching the bottom of the socket.
- The prosthesis may feel tall.

To make sure you are touching the bottom of your socket, use the “**Powder Test.**”

1. Put a little baby/talcum powder in the bottom of the socket.
2. Put on your socks.
3. Put on your prosthesis and walk approximately 2 – 3 minutes.
4. Remove your prosthesis.
 - If majority of the powder is stuck on the bottom of your socks, your residual limb has good contact inside the prosthesis.
 - If majority of the powder remains in the bottom of the socket, the number of sock “ply” you are wearing is excessive. Remove one ply of sock and repeat powder test.

GENERAL CARE FOR YOUR PROSTHESIS

1. Always start the day with a clean liner and clean socks.
2. Be sure that the socks do not wrinkle when you put them on.
3. Always carry several extra socks with you to accommodate changes in your residual limb that may occur during the day. A few easy access places are: purse, glove compartment, a gym bag or coat pocket.
4. Do not expose your prosthesis to excessive heat (stoves, heaters, fireplace, etc.).

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5. Try not to miss your regularly scheduled follow-up appointments.
6. If you feel changes to your prosthesis need to be made, **DO NOT TRY TO ADJUST THE PROSTHESIS YOURSELF. CONTACT YOUR PROSTHETIST WITH ANY CONCERNS.**

CLEANING YOUR PROSTHESIS

1. The **socket** may be wiped clean with mild soap and water or alcohol.
2. Clean your **socks** daily:
 - You may wash your socks by hand, unless otherwise instructed. Washing by hand reduces the opportunity for your socks to shrink in size. Always use cool water.
 - You should use a mild soap (such as Ivory or Woolite) and socks must be rinsed thoroughly. Any soap residue may cause skin irritation.
 - Lay your socks flat to air dry or on the “Air Only/Cool” setting of the dryer. Never dry your socks in the sun as it may ruin material.
3. **Gel liners:**
 - Invert the liner for cleaning.
 - Wash by hand with mild soap and water.
 - Lay flat to dry or use a drying stand.
 - Rotate use of gel liners on a daily basis.
4. Orange foam **soft insert:**
 - Wash the inside of the insert with mild soap and water.
 - Be sure to rinse out thoroughly. Soap residue may irritate your skin.
 - Your soft insert should be **AIR DRIED ONLY**. Applying heat will deform the material.
 - The soft pink end pad should be cleaned in the exact manner as your soft insert.
5. **Sleeve** (this holds the prosthesis onto your leg):
 - Keep the area that is in contact with your skin clean.
 - Wash the area with mild soap and water. Be sure to rinse off all soap residue.
 - You may wipe the sleeve with alcohol placed on a clean cloth.

If you have further questions or do not understand something, please contact our office.

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