

DANKMEYER

PROSTHETICS & ORTHOTICS

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

The goal of the break in schedule is to achieve full time wear of your new prosthesis without damage to the skin of your residual limb. In order to do this without skin breakdown, it is important to increase wearing time in regular incremental amounts.

IF YOU OVERDO IT, THE RESULTING SKIN DAMAGE WILL SUBSTANTIALLY DELAY THE TIME WHEN YOU WILL BE ABLE TO WALK ON YOUR PROSTHESIS!

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

Your Prosthetist will determine a break-in schedule which will be maintained until you are wearing the prosthesis full-time. The amount of time it will take you to reach a full-time wearing schedule is different for each person. Keeping a close watch on your skin and following your break-in schedule will allow you to quickly adjust to your prosthesis.

MAIN OFFICE: 1-800-879-1245

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WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

Your residual limb is not accustomed to being contained in a prosthesis. It is normal to experience excessive perspiration in the beginning. You may notice your prosthetic socks are damp at the end of each wear session. This is OK, just remember to use clean socks each day.

It is also normal to experience some muscle tenderness. You are using your muscles to control the prosthesis, so some muscle fatigue is normal. Your endurance will increase over time. This is why it is important to follow your break-in schedule.

Your limb will begin to change shape, become smaller, within the first few months of wearing the prosthesis. The change is primarily due to residual edema from the initial surgery and atrophy or "shrinking" of the tissues and muscles surrounding the tibia and fibula (bones below your knee). You can accommodate this change by increasing the number of prosthetic socks you will wear with the prosthesis.

There are several other reasons why your limb may change shape and affect the fit of the socket on your residual limb. The most common causes are: weight loss or weight gain greater than 5 lbs, medications and pregnancy.

MANAGING YOUR PROSTHETIC SOCKS

It is very important for you to learn 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.

ALL ABOUT PLY AND SOCK SIZES

Prosthetic socks are specially designed for wearing with a prosthesis. They are available in many different sizes and are usually fit to an individual by his/her prosthetist. You must wear the right size sock and the right number (ply) of socks.

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“Ply” tells you the thickness of a sock. Socks come in three main thicknesses or ply: 1-ply, 3-ply, and 6-ply. A 6-ply is thicker than a 3-ply and a 3-ply is thicker than a 1-ply.

Keep track of your total number of sock ply. For example, a 3-ply and a 6-ply add up to a total of 9-ply. If you know your TOTAL ply, you can combine different ply socks that add up to your total. For example, to get a total of 6-ply, you can wear:

- Six 1-plys, OR
- Two 3-plys, OR
- One 6-ply.

Your prosthetist will assist you in determining the correct number of sock ply you must wear with your prosthesis.

NO WRINKLES ALLOWED

When putting on your socks, you should put on one sock at a time. Pull snug so that there are no wrinkles. A wrinkle in the sock could cause skin irritation. The seam of your sock should run side to side, never front to back.

ADJUSTING YOUR SOCK PLY

When you start wearing your prosthesis, it is normal for your residual limb to shrink in size. After wearing your prosthesis, your residual limb may shrink so much that a new sock or even a new prosthesis may be needed. You will need to increase your sock ply to maintain the appropriate fit of your prosthesis. Your prosthetist will determine when a new prosthesis is needed.

WHEN TO ADD SOCKS

Since the prosthesis does not shrink along with your leg, 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.

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- 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.

***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.

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4. Do not expose your prosthesis to excessive heat (stoves, heaters, fireplace, etc.).
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. **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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