

DANKMEYER

PROSTHETICS & ORTHOTICS

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT USING PROSTHETIC SOCKS

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR 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 you 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.

"Ply" tells you how thick a sock is. 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.

SHEATHS

In addition to prosthetic socks, most people also wear a prosthetic sheath next to their skin. This sheath helps wick perspiration away from the skin. It also protects the skin from blisters and abrasions. A sheath does not count as a "ply" of sock.

MAIN OFFICE: 1-800-879-1245

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

Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

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NO WRINKLES ALLOWED

When putting on your socks, you should put on one sock at a time beginning with your sheath (if you have one). The seam of your sheath should be placed in the back behind your residual limb. The seam of your "ply" sock should run side to side, never front to back. You do not want any sock seams to cross over your shin bone. This will prevent rubbing and possible skin breakdown on the front of your bone.

SHRINKAGE

When you start wearing your prosthesis (artificial limb), 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**:

If you are a Below-the-Knee (BK) Amputee:

- You may feel the socket (bar) pushing up under your knee cap.
- There may be 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 may feel loose or it feels like it "bangs" back and forth in the bottom of the socket.
- The prosthesis may feel short.

If you are an Above-the-Knee (AK) Amputee:

- You may feel pressure/burning in the groin area.
- You may feel the end of your residual limb hit 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.**

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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/losing weight and weather changes. You know you need to remove a ply of sock when you feel one of the following

Warning Signs:

If you are a Below-the-Knee (BK) Amputee:

- You may feel pressure from the “bar” in the socket on the shin of your leg.
- There may be a red mark on the shin of your leg.
- The end of your residual limb is not touching the bottom of the socket.
- The prosthesis may feel tall.

If you are an Above-the-Knee (AK) Amputee:

- You may feel your “sit bone” sitting on the prosthesis.
- 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 your socket.
2. Put on your socks.
3. Put on your prosthesis and walk approximately 2-3 minutes.
4. Remove your prosthesis.
 - If the majority of the powder is stuck on the bottom of your socks, your residual limb has good contact inside the prosthesis.
 - If the 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.

There is a "learning curve" to properly adjusting your sock ply. Try not to become frustrated or discouraged. Questions should be directed to your **Prosthetist or **Physical Therapist**.

CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO THE SKIN

- Always put on clean socks and sheath each day. Sweat and dirt are a “breeding ground” for bacteria.
- 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.

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- 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. Never dry your socks in the sun as it will ruin the material.

If you have further questions or if you do not understand something, please call your prosthetist.

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