

Cosmetic Cover (Cosmesis)

This is the foam outer part of your artificial limb that covers the structure and the internal components and is usually made from soft foam.

- Do not remove the cosmesis to see what is underneath once the artificial limb is delivered to you. The cosmetic cover will have been fixed in a special way and removing it may interfere with the internal structure and may make the limb unsafe. Contact the clinic to make a repair appointment if you need any alterations or repairs to your cosmetic cover.
- Often limbs are covered with a loose stocking or plastic cover over the cosmetic foam, which will need replacing periodically. You can replace the stocking cover quite easily. Contact the clinic and explain what you want. The appropriate stocking can be posted to you. If you have a plastic cover you will need to make an appointment to have it replaced. You can use a damp cloth and a nonabrasive cleaner such as washing up liquid to clean the plastic cover.
- Do not immerse the limb and cosmetic cover in water and avoid getting the artificial limb wet.

Finally

Common sense and good practice are the keys to avoiding many problems with your stump and artificial limb. It is worthwhile having your artificial limb checked on a yearly basis even if you are experiencing no particular problems. Follow the advice in these pages and always feel free to discuss any concerns you may have at your next appointment.

Caring for Your Lower Limb Prosthesis



The artificial limb (prosthesis) that you have been provided, has been manufactured and assembled to a high specification and often contains sophisticated devices. The components, along with the prosthetic socket, form the structure of the artificial limb and hopefully give you a device that is both comfortable and reliable for your daily living needs. However, please be aware of the following “Do’s and Don’ts” in looking after your artificial limb. These will help you keep the limb in good condition and prevent any serious fitting or mechanical problems. This leaflet provides some guidelines for your information.

The Socket & the Liner

This is the part of the artificial limb that fits onto your stump (residual limb). The following notes are important to maintain a good fit and prevent problems with your skin and the underlying tissues.

- Do take adequate time each day to clean and inspect the socket and liner. Poor hygiene within the socket and liner are one of the major causes of skin problems and stump infections. Your prosthetist will tell you how to clean the liner and socket and they may also be able to give you the manufacturer’s literature regarding specific liner care and hygiene.
- Do be careful if adding or removing socks from your stump to improve the socket fit. If you are adjusting the fit with more than three socks you probably need to contact the clinic for a review appointment.
- Do not adjust the socket yourself by cutting, trimming or putting pads in any part of it as this can lead to serious stump problems and safety issues with your artificial limb.
- If you get a sore that needs a dressing, please telephone the nurse at the clinic for advice.
- Do not immerse the socket or liner in water and, although we recommend that you don’t get the limb wet, it is advisable to clean the liner using a damp cloth and a little soapy water.

Knee Joints & Feet

If you have had an above knee (trans-femoral) amputation, your limb will usually have a socket, some kind of prosthetic knee joint and a prosthetic foot. People with below knee (trans-tibial) amputations will usually have only a socket and

a prosthetic foot. There are leaflets available which explain the features of your artificial limb in more detail. Being aware of what is good practice and looking after your artificial limb is an important part of your limb wearing and is recommended for your own personal safety.

- Do not oil, grease, lubricate or use any other chemicals on the knee or foot. If they are noisy, damaged or broken, contact the clinic to make a repair appointment.
- Do not adjust knees or feet unless your prosthetist has shown you how to do this.
- When you buy new shoes make sure that the heel height is the same as the one your artificial limb was made to. Different heel heights can cause socket and walking problems. Contact the clinic for an appointment if you need further advice. There is a separate information leaflet called “Wearing different shoes/heel heights” which explains this further. Please ask your prosthetist.
- If you need to kneel, try to avoid dropping heavily onto the prosthetic knee. Instead, lower yourself gradually into the kneeling position so you can avoid high impact on the prosthetic knee. It is best to use a kneeling pad or a cushion.
- Do not immerse prosthetic knee joints or prosthetic feet in water and avoid getting the artificial limb wet.

Suspension

The way your limb is held on is usually referred to as the suspension. Often this can be some sort of belt or strap around the knee or waist. Liners that are rolled on the stump and are held by locating a pin into a lock within the socket are another form of suspension.

- Do not cut or adjust belts and straps yourself.
- Be very careful when using liners with pins. Always ensure the stump sock you use over the liner is well away from the end of the pin as threads from the sock entering the lock may cause it to jam.
- Only ever wash or clean belts, straps and liners according to manufacturers’ instructions or on the advice of your prosthetist.