

BOOKLET

Caring for Your Upper Limb Prosthesis



Your upper limb prosthesis

Prosthetic limbs are mechanical devices made up of various components and require regular maintenance. It is your responsibility as a prosthetic user to keep the prosthetic socket and liner free from dirt, fluff or dust.

Regularly check your prosthesis for signs of wear and tear. If there are any unusual signs (visible, audible or functional), contact your prosthetist for maintenance or repair. Do not adjust screws, bolts, hinges or other parts of your prosthesis yourself.

Your prosthesis should be reviewed **every 12 months or earlier** if recommended by your prosthetist or rehab team member or if there are problems with the fit or function.



Normal use

Your prosthesis is designed to assist your daily activities. **Please take care in cases of extreme heat** (above 70°C) and in chemical environments. Avoid sand and water if using a myoelectric prosthesis.

Ask your prosthetist or rehab team member for any manufacturer's instructions related to your prosthesis.

Do not attempt to repair your prosthesis yourself. If you have any questions about your prosthesis please contact your prosthetist or rehab team member.

Your socket

Daily cleaning of the inside of your socket is required to prevent bacteria build-up. This may be required more frequently in warm weather.

Clean with a sponge or soft cloth and mild soap. Inaccessible points can be reached with a soft brush (e.g. an old toothbrush). Use a damp soft cloth on myoelectric sockets and wipe dry.

Leave to dry thoroughly overnight and clean the outside in a similar way when necessary.

Do not add any foreign material into the socket (e.g. talc, packing material).

Checking the fit

Check your skin before and after using your prosthesis. **Areas of pressure** (red or pink marks) **should disappear after 10 to 15 minutes**.

If they do not subside within a reasonable time or if new marks develop over bony areas, check the fit of your prosthesis and contact your prosthetist or rehab team member for a review if problems persist.

Signs that your prosthesis may be ill-fitting include inability to control the elbow joint or terminal device, or inability to get good myosites.

Limb socks

If you use limb socks, they should be changed daily and gently washed with mild soap (not detergent) and water. Rinse well.

Ensure the sock fits snugly, without wrinkles.

Silicone liners

Regularly inspect your liner and any attachment points for signs of wear and tear. See your prosthetist or rehab team member if the attachment points look worn.

Straps and Harness

Keep leather parts clean and dry, using leather cleaner. Your harness should be **washed weekly**.

Ask your prosthetist or rehab team member to show you how to disconnect your harness for washing and reconnect it in exactly the right places. Wash harness by hand or in the washing machine with mild soap and water.



Maintenance

Split Hooks - 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 rehab team member. Carry spare rubber bands in case of breakage and renew perished bands using a band applicator. Keep abrasive materials away from moving parts.

Cosmetic gloves - Wash the outer glove with mild soap and water. These gloves are easily stained so avoid contact with ball-point pens, dark fabrics, newsprint, lipstick, etc. Refer to manufacturer's instructions for cleaning the glove, as instructions differ between silicone and PVC gloves. Inspect gloves regularly for tears which may let water into the terminal device.

Cable – Report to your prosthetist or rehab team member for replacement if the cable is worn, bent or frayed.

Myoelectric arms – Patients with myoelectric arms must take care of the electrodes by cleaning the inside of the socket daily with a damp cloth, or more frequently on hot days. Follow the manufacturer's instructions regarding care of the battery.

Storage

Do not hang the prosthesis by the cable or harness. Store cables flat, not coiled or curved. Remove batteries when not in use.

Clothing

A t-shirt or singlet should be worn under the harness to protect the skin from chafing.

Peke Waihanga

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