

FACT SHEET

Life After Losing Fingers or a Thumb



Losing fingers or a thumb can be a big change in your life. It's normal to have less movement, feel different about how your hand looks, or feel worried about the future.

This fact sheet explains what to expect after your amputation and the support available to help you recover.

There are different options available to support your recovery, including using a prosthesis, so you can still take part in things that matter to you.

Some people may choose not to use a prosthesis, and that's okay. It's important to know what your options are so you can make a choice that's right for you.

Your first appointment

You will meet with members of the rehabilitation and prosthetic team for an assessment.

We will talk about your goals, what you do each day and your work and hobbies. This helps us find the best prosthetic options to match your lifestyle and goals. Your prosthetist has in-depth knowledge of the different options available to you and your rehabilitation therapist will help you learn how to use a device in your everyday life.

We will also discuss and explore funding pathways available to you (which can be different between health and ACC patients).

What options are available?

Protection

Following an amputation, people can experience pain, sensitivity or tenderness. To support a return to daily activities, some people may benefit from a prosthesis that protects their remaining digit. These are normally made from silicone and can help reduce discomfort and protect your hand, making everyday activities more comfortable.

Cosmetic

A cosmetic prosthesis helps your hand or finger look more like it used to, while also giving some protection. It's made to match your skin colour and if funding allows, it can include details like freckles or veins to make it look more realistic.

While it doesn't have moving parts, some wires can be added to help you hold and grip everyday items more easily.



Functional

A functional prosthesis restores the length of your finger and can help it move. Movement happens using your working joint, or with help from your other hand. The type of prosthesis available will depend on the level of your amputation. Your prosthetist and therapist will talk with you about what might work best.

What rehabilitation can I expect?

After your amputation, you'll likely need rehabilitation to help your hand heal, improve range of movement and reduce sensitivity.

You will likely be referred to a local hand therapist for this. If you have a prosthesis, your Peke Waihangā therapist will help you learn how to use it in your everyday life.



With your permission, your Peke Waihangā therapist can work together with your hand therapist to support your recovery.

What other help might be available?

Assistive devices

Assistive devices are tools that help you do everyday things more easily. These can include special knives and forks, kitchen tools, or lever taps that can be pushed off instead of turned off.



For more helpful resources, please visit our website: www.pw.co.nz/resources

An occupational therapist can help you find the right tools or ways to do important things, like cooking, getting dressed and looking after yourself.



Psychology support

Losing part of a limb is a big change to your body and your life. It's normal to have strong feelings like anxiety, worry, fear or sadness. Everyone reacts differently.

A psychologist can give you ideas and support to help you cope with these feelings and adjust during your journey of recovery.

Peke Waihangā offers a Peer Support Service where you can be put in touch with a trained volunteer who has gone through similar limb loss to you. Visit the website at www.peersupport.nz.

Contacts

Auckland Centre

7 Horopito Street,
Mount Eden, Auckland 1024
☎ 0508 630 630
✉ auckland@nzals.co.nz

Hamilton Centre

222 Pembroke Street,
Hamilton 3204
☎ 0508 838 838
✉ hamilton@nzals.co.nz

Tauranga Centre

160 Fraser Street,
Tauranga 3112
☎ 0508 434 434
✉ tauranga@nzals.co.nz

National Office

☎ (04) 385 9410
✉ info@nzals.co.nz

Wellington Centre

42-46 Mein Street,
Newtown, Wellington 6021
☎ 0508 389 389
✉ wellington@nzals.co.nz

Christchurch Centre

330 Burwood Road,
Christchurch 8083
☎ 0508 383 383
✉ christchurch@nzals.co.nz

Dunedin Centre

464 Cumberland Street,
Dunedin 9016
☎ 0508 474 474
✉ dunedin@nzals.co.nz

Learn more about Peke Waihanga

💻 www.pw.co.nz
💻 www.orthoticservice.co.nz
💻 www.peersupport.nz

Find Peke Waihanga online

Follow Peke Waihanga on social media for the latest news, stories and events:

📘 Peke Waihanga
📷 @pekewaihanga

📘 Peke Waihanga
📺 Peke Waihanga

December 2025, V2.0

Peke Waihanga

Artificial Limb Service



**Amputees
Federation
of New Zealand
Incorporated**

Produced with support from Limbs 4 Life Inc.