

Going home following a stay in hospital can raise mixed feelings. You will need to think about what needs to be done to make your home safe.

This Fact Sheet looks at what you should consider prior to going home and the things that you will need to help you to access, live and function independently at home.

## What is an assistive device?

An assistive device is the name given to equipment which aids your ability to do things. Such items may include knives and forks, kitchen equipment, and bathroom options (such as; taps which flick off rather than turn off) to make life easier.

## What is a structural modification?

Structural modifications refer to parts of your home which require changes - such as; changes to door handles and/or the addition of specialised taps and knobs.

In some instances, building standards need to be met when some home modifications are made - so it is important you seek the correct assistance when having modifications made to your home.

In general, if you require an assistive device fitted in your home or structural modifications, you should be assessed by your Occupational Therapist to make sure that you receive devices that suit your needs. It is important to discuss funding options and costs for these items.

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# NZALS

New Zealand Artificial Limb Service  
Peke Waihangā, Aotearoa



Amputees  
Federation  
of New Zealand  
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## FACT SHEET

# Returning home following an upper limb amputation



## What to consider following an upper limb amputation?

Consider what daily activities require the use of two hands and how you may achieve these now. We recommend you work with an Occupational Therapist and/or Physiotherapist to find the most appropriate solutions.



Some general considerations may include:

- Examine options when it comes to cutlery (knives/forks/spoons) and chopping devices, as there are specialised boards which can hold items down so that you can cut them easily.
- Buttons and shoe laces can be difficult for some upper limb amputees.
- Electronic options for computer keyboards and a mouse and/or voice controlled programs and software.
- Changes to your vehicle which will support you to drive, for example, a spinner knob.
- There are also simple strap-on devices and attachments which do not require the use of a prosthesis, such as a knife or fork.

## What prosthetic solutions are available for upper limb amputees?

There are a number of different prosthetic solutions for upper limb amputees and it is always good to chat to your Prosthetist about the options which may be available and suitable for you.

Upper limb prosthetics have advanced greatly in recent years, but it is important to think about what you would like to achieve and discuss this fully with the team at the Limb Centre.

There are a range of upper limb technology devices to assist you in your work and leisure activities for example sports or playing music.



Some good examples of what is available can be found at [www.trsprsthetics.com](http://www.trsprsthetics.com). There are also different terminal devices (devices which attach to the end of a prosthesis) that can be changed to suit specific activities. Talk to your Prosthetist about your options.

The Independent Living Charitable Trust has a range of assistive devices. You can find out more by visiting: [www.ilsnz.org](http://www.ilsnz.org) or call 0800 625 100.

### TIP

There are many products available that can help you to live independently. Seek advice from your healthcare team if you need assistance or support.

