

Having an amputation is a life changing event. **You will be faced with challenges and need to learn new ways of doing things.**

This Fact Sheet explores the different phases following amputation and helps you to think about the pathways ahead of you.

The recovery time following amputation is different for everyone and can depend on a number of different factors, these can include:

- Your general health.
- How quickly your amputation wound heals.
- Whether you have a place or home to go to that is safe and accessible for you.
- How easily you can get help and continue your rehabilitation outside the hospital.

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

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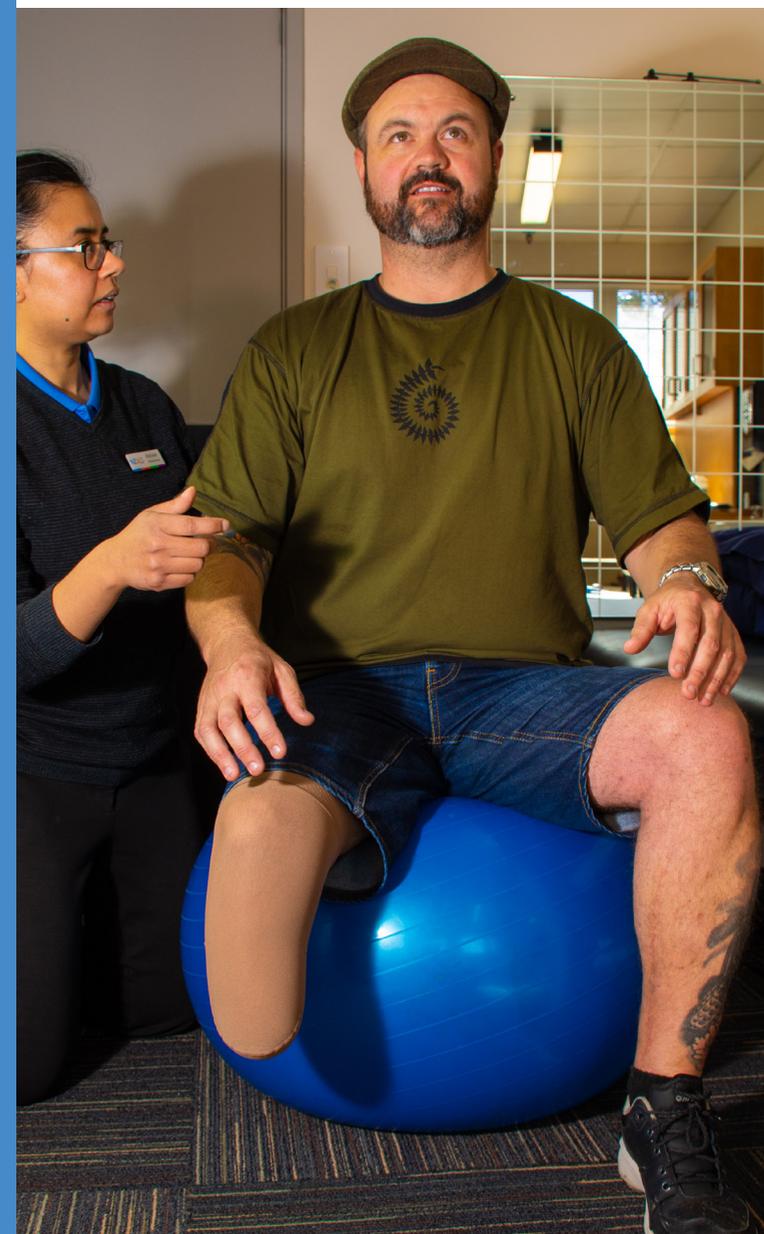
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Artificial Limb Service



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FACT SHEET

What to Expect Following Amputation



What are the phases after amputation?

After amputation the care you receive can usually be divided into three separate phases. These phases will all overlap — it's just easier to talk about them this way to help you to understand the process.

1. Acute care phase

This is the time in hospital when you have the amputation surgery.

The important things at this stage are good pain relief, healing of your wound, and preparation for the future.



Things you might do at this time include:

- Letting the nurses and doctors know about any pain you experience so they can provide appropriate pain relief.
- You may be provided with something to help control the swelling around your amputation to protect it from knocks.

2. Rehabilitation phase

The important things at this stage are **learning to manage any pain and seeking help if you need**. It is as well as beginning to think about what you need to do to increase your mobility and independence levels.

Things you might do at this time include:

- Getting strong and healthy.
- Increasing your levels of exercise to help with your general fitness and ability to move around.
- Learning new ways of doing things so that you can be safe and independent.
- Understanding how to take care of your new condition.



Staff will help you so that you can look after yourself and get any help you may need to be safe, healthy and happy.

It is important that you **ask lots of questions about the things you don't understand**.

Make sure you try things (with the assistance of your therapist) before you decide you can or can't do them on your own.

3. Community care phase

Things you might do at this time include:

- Continuing to work on your health and fitness.
- Increasing and working on the skills you have already been taught while you were in rehabilitation.
- Setting new goals and skills with your therapist and working on those goals together.

Once you leave rehabilitation you will still need help from some of the therapists who have worked with you. **Continue to discuss your goals with your therapist**. Think about returning to work, your community activities, and what you will need to help you to manage your life independently.

Tip: Start thinking about how life will be once you can get up and be mobile again.



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