

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Can my prosthesis get wet?

Rain and getting water on the prosthesis will not hurt it. Some components are better than others for those who intend to be fully immersed in water. Discuss intended activities with your prosthetist so that components best suited are chosen for your prosthesis. Components may wear out more quickly if immersed in water and may require more upkeep. Sometimes an amputee will wear a prosthesis to the pool, remove it to swim, and then wear the prosthesis again after drying off. Sometimes a special water or shower leg is made. Most of the components in this system are waterproof and typically are less expensive components than used on the everyday prosthesis.

### How many socks should I wear?

Determining sock size is probably the hardest thing to grasp about a new prosthesis. The prosthesis is a static volume, but your leg shrinks and swells throughout the day. Socks are used to take up space in the prosthesis. Too many socks can cause pressure and discomfort on the bottom of the leg and too few socks can have the same effect. Incorrect sock ply can lead to wounds on the leg. The best way to figure out sock ply is to assess how your prosthesis fits and feels. The socket of the leg should slide on with a little resistance. If it goes on too easily, add socks. If you can't get into it all the way, decrease sock ply. Often you will have to add more socks after the first 10-15 minutes in your prosthesis and you will have to put on more socks as the day progresses. Always carry socks with you. If you have trouble getting your prosthesis on in the morning, wear your shrinker sock at night to limit swelling.

#### Too Many Socks

- Pain on bottom of leg
- Bottom of knee cap is well out of socket
- Prosthesis does not slide on all the way
- Prosthesis feels too long

#### Too Little Socks

- Pain on bottom of leg
- Knee cap pain/pressure
- Leg slides in prosthesis too far
- Prosthesis slide on very easily
- Blisters on the bottom of the leg

### Can I use lotion on my leg?

Lotions should not be used on the leg inside of the prosthesis. They contain perfumes and other chemicals that can actually cause the leg to break out. If you need to use lotion, apply it at night and then wash it off in the morning before putting the leg back on. Your prosthetist does have some special moisturizers formulated specifically for an amputated leg that can be used inside of the prosthesis.

### Can I get a protective cover for my leg?

Sometimes people will request a protective cover for their prosthesis. Its purpose is to cover and protect the components of the prosthesis. Measurements of the sound leg are taken and the cover is shaped to look similar to shape of the sound leg. Since a preparatory prosthesis requires many adjustments, it is not feasible to add a cover to this leg. A cover may be added to a definitive leg though.

### My shrinkers socks keep falling off, is there anything I can do?

Unfortunately, shrinker socks always tend to slip down. The sock is graded in tension from the bottom to the top and this tends to make them want to slip off of your leg. You will have to pull them up several times throughout the day.

### Does it matter what shoes I wear with my prosthesis?

Yes, what shoes you wear will make a difference in how your prosthesis fits and feels. Initially your leg will be aligned with a shoe on. When you switch shoes take note of how high the heel is. Switching to a shoe with the same heel height is not a problem. Most shoes have a 3/8" heel height. If you wear shoes with more or less heel than you were originally aligned with, it can be a problem. Let your prosthetist know that you intend to wear shoes of varying heights.

## Care of prosthetic Socks

Prosthetic socks are used by amputees to maintain proper position of the residual limb inside the prosthesis. Additionally, the prosthetic sock protects and cushions the skin, absorbs perspiration, and aids in reducing friction between the prosthesis and the residual limb.

### **PROSTHETIC SOCKS SHOULD BE CHANGED DAILY AND WASHED IN WARM OR COOL WATER WITH A MILD SOAP.**

We advise that the socks be washed separately from the other laundry, as dyes from other clothes can become imbedded in the prosthetic sock and may irritate the residual limb.

### **PROSTHETIC SOCKS ARE WOVEN ESPECIALLY FOR THEIR INTENDED USE AND ARE AVAILABLE IN VARIOUS SIZES AND THICKNESSES.**

Your prosthetist will determine the size that is correct and generally will supply you with:

- A nylon sheath (worn next to the skin)
- A 1-ply poly-soft (stretchy, white sock)
- A 3-ply wool sock
- A 5-ply wool sock

With your first prosthesis, you will be supplied with approximately 12 prosthetic socks. If you need more socks, please contact your prosthetist.

The number of ply relates to the thickness of the prosthetic sock and aids in maintaining proper fit of the prosthesis. A 5-ply is made out of five threads of yarn whereas a 3-ply sock is made out of three threads of yarn. When these two socks are used together, there will be a total of eight (8) plies of sock on the residual limb. It is important to remember that as the prosthetic sock becomes worn, the thickness of the sock changes, i.e., an old 5-ply sock would perhaps equal a new 3-ply.

It is also important to remember that the proper amount of socks that you should be wearing is what feels comfortable to you. If the prosthesis feels too loose, try adding a ply of socks. If it feels too tight, try decreasing the number of ply. If the prosthesis still does not feel comfortable to you, contact your prosthetist, as additional padding in the socket may be necessary.

Prosthetic socks are available in a wide variety of thicknesses, lengths and materials.

**If you have any questions on the selection and care of prosthetic socks, please contact your prosthetist. Your health and comfort are important to us.**