

Orthopedic Arts

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE USE AND CARE OF YOUR PROSTHETIC/ORTHOTIC DEVICE

PROSTHESIS

If this is your first prosthesis, you need gait training by a qualified physical therapist before you are ready to use the device independently. DO NOT attempt to don (put on) your prosthesis without your physician's, physical therapist's or prosthetist's supervision. Donning it incorrectly and/or ambulating (walking) with a prosthesis without proper training may cause a potentially dangerous fall and injury. Unless otherwise instructed, you must contact the prescribing physician and report to him/her that you received your first prosthesis and that you were instructed to seek physical therapy for gait training. Contact your prosthetist should there be any problems.

If you have had a prosthesis before and successfully used it, or if you have completed your initial gait training and are allowed by your physical to use the prosthesis independently, you must understand that every new prosthesis fits a little differently and requires a period of breaking-in. Do not engage in prolonged and/or strenuous physical activity, including ambulation for unusually long distances for the first week. Make every effort to regularly check or have checked the integrity of the skin on the residual limb, especially if due to the cause of your amputation, the skin sensation is reduced. Examine (or have examined) the condition of the residual limb every 30 minutes of ambulation for the first 2 days and twice a day thereafter, or if there is any discomfort in the prosthetic socket. Should there be any skin breakdown, fluid discharge or redness that does not go away in 15 minutes, discontinue the use of the prosthesis and contact your prosthetist.

Proper sock management is essential to the comfortable fit of your prosthesis. It is normal for your residual limb to change volume (size) during the day and/or from one day to the other, especially if your blood circulation is compromised and/or you are on dialysis. Follow your prosthetist's instructions how to adjust the number of socks worn. The design of your prosthesis is such that it relies on full contact with the skin of the residual limb. If the volume of the limb decreases, you lose that contact. Therefore, you must add the appropriate number of socks to regain such contact and fit.

It is also extremely important to examine (or have examined) visually the integrity of your prosthesis and its removable parts daily. DO NOT use your prosthesis or its part if any of the following occurs: the gel liner has holes in it; the pin on the gel liner is not screwed in completely or is loose; the strap on the gel liner is worn out, or it is not attached securely, or its Velcro strips are worn out; the proximal (top) attachment for the strap either on the prosthesis or the gel liner is worn out, torn, detached or delaminated; if you hear or feel any increased noise, clicking or air sound from the prosthesis while ambulating; if you feel sudden instability or unusual rotation of the foot; if you have discomfort on the socket and you are not able to resolve it by simple sock management.

The fit of your prosthesis and its integrity must be regularly inspected by your prosthetist. You must keep your follow up appointments. If you have not been given one, please call and request it. Components and materials that were used in your device were chosen based on your body weight, therefore it is extremely important that you contact your practitioner immediately, should you gain more than 10 lbs of weight. You should also contact your practitioner if you lose weight as your prosthesis may not fit adequately due to anatomical changes in the residual limb. Additionally, you shall inform your physician of any changes in your medical condition.

Should you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact your prosthetist at 718-858-2400.

ORTHOSIS

If this is your first orthosis, you might require physical therapy before you are ready to use the device independently. DO NOT attempt to don (put on) your orthosis without your physician's, physical therapist's or orthotist's supervision. Donning it incorrectly and/or ambulating (walking) with an orthosis without proper training may cause a potentially dangerous fall and injury. Unless otherwise instructed, you must contact the prescribing physician and report to him/her that you received your first orthosis and that you were instructed to seek physical therapy. Contact your orthotist should there be any problems.

If you have had an orthotic device before and successfully used it, or if you have completed your initial physical therapy and are allowed by your physical to use the device independently, you must understand that every new orthosis fits a little differently and requires a period of breaking-in. Do not engage in prolonged and/or strenuous physical activity, including ambulation for unusually long distances for the first week. Make every effort to regularly check or have checked the integrity of the skin, especially if your skin sensation is reduced. Examine (or have examined) the condition of the skin every 30 minutes of orthotic wear during the first 2 days and twice per day thereafter, or if there is any discomfort. Should there be any skin breakdown, fluid discharge or redness that does not go away in 15 minutes, discontinue the use of the device and contact your orthotist.

Unless instructed otherwise by your orthotist or physician, follow the following wearing schedule for your new orthosis: one hour twice a day for the first 3 days; 2 hours twice a day for the following 3 days; 4 hours twice a day for the following week; all day or as tolerated thereafter.

It is also extremely important to examine (or have examined) visually the integrity of your orthosis and its removable parts. DO NOT use your orthosis or its part if any of the following occurs: the straps or their attachments are worn out or do not feel secure; if you feel or hear any increased noise while the device is in use, including clicking, squeaks; if you feel sudden instability, if you feel discomfort in the limb.

The fit of your orthotic device and its integrity must be regularly inspected by your practitioner. You must keep your follow up appointments. If you have not been given one, please call and request it. Components and materials that were used in your device were chosen based on your body weight; therefore, it is extremely important that you contact your practitioner immediately, should you gain more than 10 lbs of weight. You should also contact your practitioner if you lose weight as your device may not fit adequately due to anatomical changes in the residual limb. Additionally, you shall inform your physician of any changes in your medical condition.

Should you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact your orthotist at 718-858-2400.

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DISCLOSURE OF POTENTIAL RISKS AND PRECAUTIONS

In addition to the above-mentioned risks, if these guidelines for use and care are not followed closely, please be aware that even if all the above guidelines are followed, a prosthetic or an orthotic device is a mechanical apparatus that might malfunction or break. Such malfunction might cause an injury to you; however, such mechanical failures are extremely rare. Orthopedic Arts Laboratory, Inc., always follows all manufacturers recommendations to reduce to a minimum any possibility of such mechanical failures. Additionally, a prosthetic socket or orthotic surfaces are in continuous contact with your skin and although your device has been meticulously fitted to the contour of your body, there is a chance that you might get a skin breakdown and/or irritation. This is especially relevant for patients with peripheral vascular disease and other disorders that cause reduced skin sensitivity. Following the above wearing schedule and other recommendations will greatly reduce such occurrences.