

# **Taking care of your limb and prosthetic equipment**

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**Tips on how to take care of your prosthetic leg  
silicone liner and residual limb**



It's really important to consistently take good care of your prosthesis, liner and residual limb. Good hygiene keeps you healthy and mobile and ensures that you avoid skin irritations and injuries. By regularly cleaning your residual limb, liner and prosthetic socket, you protect your skin from inflammation and infection. It also increases the lifespan of your devices.

Let's start with residual limb care.

## **Regularly check your residual limb**

The simplest and best way you can make sure your residual limb stays clean and healthy is to check it regularly. That way, you can spot any problems early.

### **Tips to help you:**

- Use a mirror to check your residual limb from every angle.
- In the beginning, check your residual limb whenever you change your dressing or take off your prosthesis.
- Later, one daily inspection after washing your residual limb should be enough.

## **Cleanse and clean your skin**

Wearing a prosthetic leg has an impact on your skin. The prosthetic liners and sockets put pressure on the skin and make it harder for the skin to regulate temperature. This can irritate the skin and even gather bacteria. So you can keep your skin happy by cleaning it every day.

### **Here's how:**

- Clean your residual limb daily with a mild soap (pH neutral) or a special cleansing lotion.
- Apply a moisturizing cream each evening, preferably at bedtime.

## **Desensitizing residual limb**

After amputation, the skin on your residual limb will be sensitive to the touch. Wearing a prosthetic leg then puts pressure on that skin, in new places. There are a number of techniques you can use to help de-sensitize your skin, prepare and strengthen it for its new role.

For example, you can help your skin get used to different kinds of materials by touching and rubbing it with your hands or items like, towels and sponges.

## **Taking care of your prosthesis and prosthetic liner**

You can think of your liner like a sock. It wraps around your skin every day and so needs cleaning every day. You can do this by hand or in the washing machine. So it's a great idea to have at least two liners!

### **For hand washing:**

1. Roll the liner off of your residual limb.
2. Turn the liner inside-out so that the silicone that is typically on the inside is outside.
3. Thoroughly wash the silicone side with a mild (pH neutral) soap or with a special liner cleaner.
4. Rinse off the soap entirely so there is no residue.
5. Dry the liner inside and out with a towel.
6. Turn the liner back its normal form so the silicone is on the inside and clean the outside with a damp cloth.
7. Hang up the liner to dry completely. Never put it on directly on a heater and avoid direct sunlight.

### **For machine washing:**

1. Place the liner in a laundry bag (mesh bag).
2. Be sure to carefully follow the washing instructions.
3. Use a mild detergent and choose the gentlest cycle your machine offers.
4. Dry the liner inside and out with a towel.
5. Turn the liner back its normal form so the silicone is on the inside and clean the outside with a damp cloth.
6. Hang up the liner to dry completely. Never put it on directly on a heater and avoid direct sunlight.

## Prosthetic leg care—socket & textile components

- **Prosthetic liner:** A prosthetic liner is the sock you roll on to your residual limb
- **Socket:** A socket is the hard top part of the prosthesis that is made to fit your residual limb with liner

Socks are also sometimes used over the liner in case the volume of the residual limb has changed, to compensate for the loss of volume

To keep your equipment in good working order, it is important to do regular checks and keep items clean. Thanks to your prosthetic liner, your skin doesn't actually come into contact with your prosthetic socket.

You only need to wash your prosthetic socket once a week. However, if your residual limb sits directly within the socket without a liner interface, such as if you are using vacuum suction, it's important to clean your socket daily. This keeps your limb clean and healthy.

### Here's how:

1. Clean your prosthetic socket with water and pH neutral soap and then leave it to dry.
2. Disinfect the socket with an alcohol spray.

Wash other textile components of your prosthesis at least 2-3 times a week. BE sure to follow washing instructions carefully. Use a mild detergent and choose the gentlest cycle your machine offers.