

RESOURCES

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WRAPPING YOUR RESIDUAL LIMB



surviving limb loss

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WRAPPING YOUR RESIDUAL LIMB

Your residual limb will be swollen after surgery. Swelling limits movement and can cause pain. You can help reduce the swelling, shrink the residual limb, and form it into a shape that will fit well into a prosthesis by tightly wrapping the limb with elastic bandages. There are other ways to shrink the residual limb—rigid removable dressings (casts) and compressive stockings (shrinkers)—but elastic bandages are the least expensive, the easiest to find, and the simplest to use.

Any time your residual limb is not wrapped, it may swell. The wrapping technique you learn will be useful not only just after surgery, but also in the future as a way to prevent or reduce swelling, or to prepare your residual limb for a new prosthesis.



WRAPPING YOUR RESIDUAL LIMB

The goal in wrapping is to get firm, steady, smooth pressure all around your residual limb without cutting off the blood flow.

How to wrap your residual limb.

When the wound from your surgery is well healed or when the first surgical bandage is changed, depending on the advice of your doctor, you can begin wrapping your residual limb. It is best to learn how to wrap from a physical therapist, doctor, nurse, or someone else with experience in wrapping residual limbs. Or use the diagrams in this pamphlet as a guide. Keep in mind these tips:

- The better you wrap your residual limb, the better a prosthesis will fit.
- To form your residual limb into a good shape you need to put firm, steady pressure on your residual limb all the time, day and night, except when you are washing it or checking your skin. It will take several weeks of good wrapping to prepare your limb for a prosthesis.
- Make sure the elastic bandage stays smooth and free of wrinkles. Lumps will cause pressure points and could cause uneven shrinkage or skin breakdown.
- If the elastic bandage slips or was not wrapped well the first time, unwrap it and wrap it again.

- Do not completely stretch out the elastic bandage, since this will ruin the elastic quality of the bandage. Using an elastic bandage with no stretch will hurt your residual limb.
- Wrap your residual limb in a figure eight pattern, not a circular one. Wrapping in a circular pattern will cut off the blood flow and cause harm.
- The goal of wrapping is to form a cone-shaped residual limb. To do this, apply more pressure to the bottom end of the residual limb, and less pressure to the top portion.
- If you have a below-knee amputation, wrap your residual limb so your knee can still move.
- The elastic bandage needs to be changed every 4-6 hours, or more often if it becomes loose.
- Never leave the wrapping ON for more than 12 hours without changing it.
- Two or three times per day, give your residual limb a 10-minute massage before you re-wrap it.

**DO NOT
WRAP IN
A CIRCULAR
PATTERN**



Some people feel pain or discomfort from wrapping, especially in the beginning. This is normal.



All of the attention focused on your amputation is temporary. You are still a whole person, strong and capable.

CARE OF ELASTIC BANDAGES

- Use a clean bandage each day.
- After use, wash the bandage in warm water with mild soap and rinse well.
- Gently squeeze the water out and lay the bandage on a flat surface to dry.

You will be able to wrap your residual limb better than anyone.

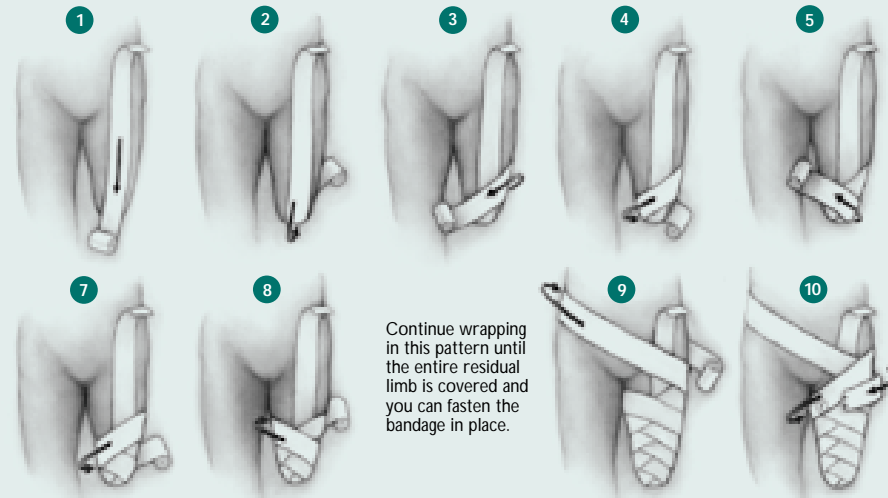
No one else will be able to tell as well as you when the wrapping is too loose, too tight, wrinkled, lumpy, or just right.

WRAPPING ABOVE KNEE

always wrap in a “figure 8” pattern

If the elastic bandage slips or was not wrapped well the first time, unwrap it and wrap it again.

The elastic bandage needs to be changed every 4-6 hours, or more often if it becomes loose.



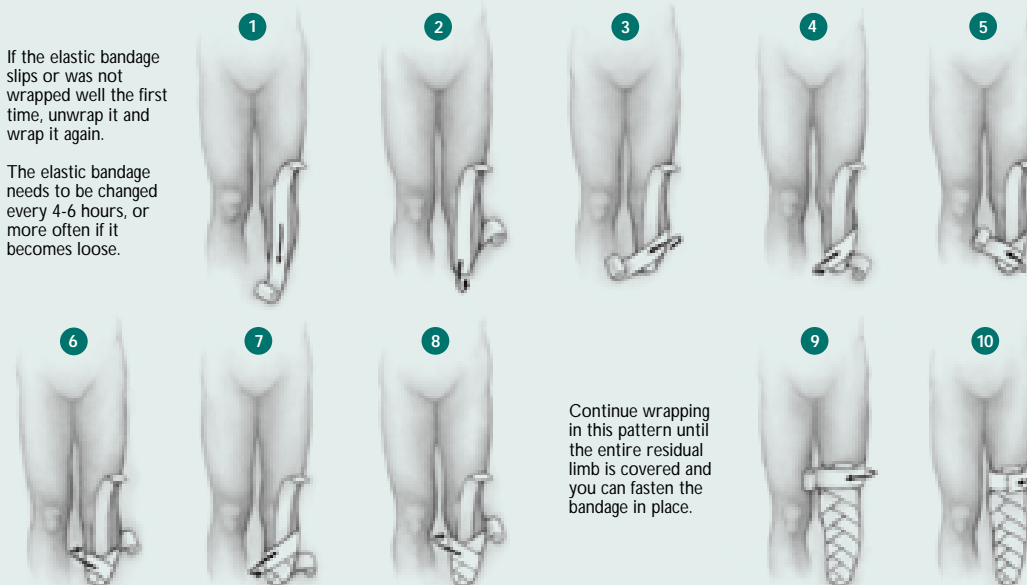
Continue wrapping in this pattern until the entire residual limb is covered and you can fasten the bandage in place.

WRAPPING BELOW KNEE

always wrap in a “figure 8” pattern

If the elastic bandage slips or was not wrapped well the first time, unwrap it and wrap it again.

The elastic bandage needs to be changed every 4-6 hours, or more often if it becomes loose.



Continue wrapping in this pattern until the entire residual limb is covered and you can fasten the bandage in place.