

RESOURCES

SURVIVING LIMB LOSS

- Amputation Surgery
- Pain After Amputation
- Wrapping Your Residual Limb
- Infection Prevention
- Emotions After Limb Loss
- Prosthetics
- Physical Rehabilitation
- Getting Back to Work
- Rights and Responsibilities
- Information for Families



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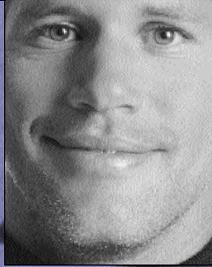
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PHYSICAL REHABILITATION



PHYSICAL REHABILITATION

surviving limb loss

Getting your strength back after an amputation and learning to use a prosthesis are not easy. You will sometimes feel tired. You will also see yourself getting stronger day by day. Be patient. Persevere.

These tips may help you recover from amputation surgery, get ready for a prosthesis, and learn to walk again.

- Use good posture and positioning
- Use your crutches correctly
- Exercise for strength
- Stay physically active



PHYSICAL REHABILITATION

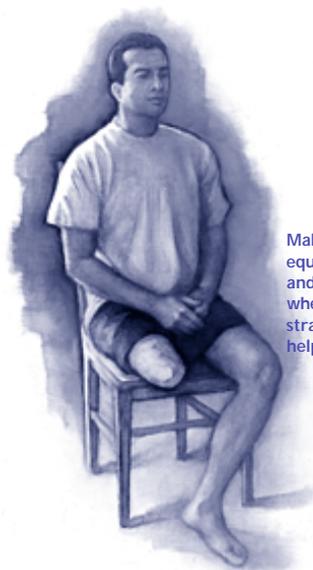
You have the strength to meet the challenges of physical rehabilitation. Take one day at a time. Be patient with yourself and with others. Pay attention to each day's successes.

Physical rehabilitation tips.

Helping your body recover from the trauma of losing a limb is a long process which will take much effort. If physical therapists are available, they can guide you. But the hard work is still yours to do. These tips may help to make your physical rehabilitation successful.

USE GOOD POSTURE AND POSITIONS

When a joint becomes stuck in one position it is called a contracture, and it becomes very difficult or even impossible to use a prosthesis. It is very important to prevent contractures. You can do this by spending most of the time in positions that keep your joints straight, not bent.



Make sure that you have equal weight on both hips and your legs together when sitting. Sitting up straight on a firm chair will help you with this posture.



Keep your residual limb flat on the bed with your legs together when lying on your back.



Lie on your stomach as much as you can to help stretch your hip joint.

USE YOUR CRUTCHES CORRECTLY

How crutches fit is important. You should be able to put 2 fingers between the crutch and your armpit. The handgrip should be at wrist level. When you walk with crutches, your weight must be on your hands. If you walk with your weight on your armpits, you will squeeze important nerves which will cause pain and permanent damage to your arms and hands. **If your crutches don't fit, ask your prosthetics center to replace or change them, or fix them yourself.**

The handgrip should be at wrist-level.



You should be able to put 2 fingers between the crutch and your armpit.

Your weight should be on your hands, not your armpits.

Walking with crutches (for persons with single leg amputations only):

- First move the crutches forward about 12 inches (30 cm).
- Step forward with your residual limb/prosthesis. Land it between your crutches.
- Lift your natural limb and step to, or past the crutches.

Going up and down stairs

Going up stairs: Step up with your natural limb first. Then bring your crutches and residual limb/prosthesis up.

Going down stairs: Don't hop. Move your crutches down first, then step down with your residual limb/prosthesis. Lastly, step down with your natural limb.

EXERCISE FOR STRENGTH

Learning to use a prosthesis is a gradual process. Every day, you will be able to do a little bit more. Slow but sure progress is best. If you try to do too much too soon, you may cause yourself harm, and then your progress will slow down.

You will need very strong leg and hip muscles to use a prosthesis. Try these strengthening exercises.



Lie on your back, keep your residual limb straight, and raise it until it is at the same height as your natural limb. Hold for 5 seconds. Slowly lower it and relax. Do 3 sets of 10 repetitions.



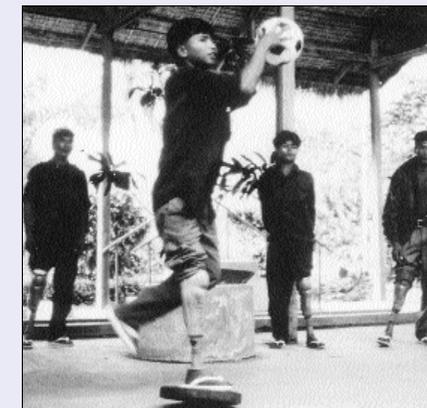
Lie on your stomach, keep your hips flat against the bed, hands under your chin to support your head. Raise your residual limb toward the ceiling. Hold for 5 seconds. Slowly lower it back down and relax. Do 3 sets of 10 repetitions.



Lie on your side, raise your residual limb toward the ceiling, making sure to keep it in line with your body. Try not to roll backward or forward. Hold for 5 seconds. Lower it and relax. Do 3 sets of 10 repetitions.



Lie on your side, keep your residual limb straight, and raise it toward the ceiling. Hold for 5 seconds. Lower it and relax. Do 3 sets of 10 repetitions.



EXERCISE

While you are recovering from surgery to help your body heal faster.

For the rest of your life to keep your body and mind strong and healthy.

STAY PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

After an amputation, you may be tempted to lead a less physically active life because it takes more energy to move with a prosthesis. DON'T let this happen! Exercise is good for everyone. It is a proven fact that people who play sports and exercise regularly feel better, both physically and emotionally. Simple ways to keep up your strength are walking, riding a bike, and playing sports.

For a person with limb loss, there are many reasons to exercise and play sports. Participating in sports and exercise can help you:

- spend time with friends
- build confidence
- feel less anxious
- become physically stronger
- have a better emotional outlook
- have better muscle tone, control, coordination, and balance