

Common Questions After Upper Limb Amputation

It's only natural to have a lot of questions following amputation surgery. Here are answers to a few common ones to get you started.

MY RESIDUAL LIMB IS STILL HEALING FROM SURGERY AND SOMETHING HAS CHANGED. WHEN SHOULD I LET MY DOCTOR KNOW?

Call your healthcare provider right away or seek immediate medical care if you notice any of the following:

- Skin separation along the surgical scar
- A bad smell from the scar or the entire limb
- The area around the scar is warm or hot, or becomes red or swollen
- Pus or yellow drainage from the scar, or thick discharge that is brownish gray
- A sudden increase in pain or severe tenderness in the limb
- Fever of 100.4° F (38.0°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider

WHEN WILL I BE ABLE TO RETURN TO ACTIVITIES AGAIN?

Returning to activities after an upper limb amputation varies depending on factors like the level of amputation, how quickly you heal, overall health, and personal goals.

Generally, the initial focus is on healing and managing pain and swelling.

Next, the pre-prosthetic phase involves preparing the residual limb for a prosthesis, including exercises to improve strength and flexibility. Once the prosthesis is fitted, training begins to learn how to use it effectively for daily life and activities.

Work with your physicians and prosthetist to determine when you are able to return to activities.



For more information, scan the code or visit [HangerClinic.com/ULResources](https://www.HangerClinic.com/ULResources).

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WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF UPPER LIMB PROSTHESES AVAILABLE?

There are several types of upper limb prostheses, each designed to meet different needs and preferences. Options range from cosmetic to functional, activity-specific prostheses. Each type has its advantages and is suited to different lifestyles and needs. Work with your prosthetist to determine the best type of prosthesis to fit your lifestyle and goals.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO ADAPT TO A PROSTHETIC HAND OR ARM?

The time it takes to get and adapt to a prosthesis varies. Several factors influence this, including the type of prosthesis, your practice routine, intended use, and any complications. Adapting to the prosthesis may also involve learning new muscle movements and patterns.

Working with a physical and/or occupational therapist, you'll get a customized schedule for practicing skills and exercises. Additionally, plan for time to mentally and emotionally adapt. Practice patience and self-compassion, as each person has their own unique timeline.

WHERE CAN I FIND PEER SUPPORT, EDUCATION, AND RESOURCES?

Local support groups and events are great opportunities to build connections, find support, and share advice. You can connect with others through AMPOWER®, a nationwide network of trained peer mentors who have successfully recovered and rehabilitated following an amputation.

Mentors are available to speak face-to-face, over the phone, online, and through e-mail. The AMPOWER team can try to match you with someone who has a similar limb difference level and similar life experiences.

There are also many events across the nation, from local events to EmpowerFest. To explore events in your area, reach out to your local Hanger Clinic and visit [HangerClinic.com/Events](https://www.hangerclinic.com/events).



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