

# Nutrition & Exercise After Upper Limb Loss

In the early days after surgery, good self-care is important to your healing. Nutrition and movement are both critical as you recover and move forward. It's also important to eat well, stay hydrated, and stay active to heal properly and fuel yourself for upcoming challenges and adventures.

## NUTRITION & MOVEMENT

Good nutrition and drinking fluids are essential as you recover from the trauma of surgery. If you experience nausea or constipation, let your care team know, and they can make meal adjustments and consider medications to help alleviate your discomfort. You will also be encouraged to move around within your abilities and energy limits. Your nurse may teach you breathing and other mild exercises until you're ready to work with a physical therapist.



## ONGOING SELF-CARE

### Healing from surgery.

As your body works to repair itself, it uses protein, energy from carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals. It is important to make sure you are getting enough quality nutrients. Whole foods such as meats, vegetables, and fruits are good sources of high-quality nutrients. If you find shopping or preparing meals difficult, consider fresh-packed convenience meals,



prepared salads, and cut-up fresh fruits and vegetables. When purchasing processed or frozen meals, look for options not high in sodium, fat, and/or sugar. If you need supplemental nutrition or other assistance, reach out to your care team for resources.

### Supporting your energy needs over time.

We often overlook the effects that stretching, meditation, and nutrition can have on our bodies and lives. Stretching and meditation help you become more aware of your body and connect you to your physical movement, while nutrition and a healthy fitness routine fuel your body and provide energy to support its many functions.



### Managing water retention or swelling.

As a natural part of the healing process, you may retain water and experience swelling. To minimize this, drink plenty of water and reduce sodium in your diet. Also, wear your shrinker and move your body. Lightly contract the muscles in your residual limb, several



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

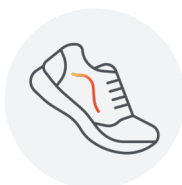
\* Hanger Clinic: Upper Limb Prosthetic Specialty Network

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times per day. Movement will help your system naturally mobilize fluids that build up. For example, if you have a below-elbow amputation, concentrate on contracting the muscles that controlled your hand or wrist. Holding a light contraction for 2-3 seconds can aid in moving fluid out of your limb.

### Exercising and becoming

**more active.** Exercise and strength training are critical to improving your coordination and strengthening the muscles in your core that coordinate movement and provide upper-body balance. Maintaining good balance and coordination may improve your abilities to complete daily activities. From there, endurance and strength training exercises can help you get back to doing the activities you enjoy in life.



Simple store-bought items such as elastic exercise bands can be adapted for resistance training of your residual limb. Maintaining strength in your remaining joints such as your back, shoulder, and elbow can improve your use of a prosthesis. Ask your physical therapist for suggestions or work with a personal trainer with limb loss experience.

**Helping to ensure prosthetic comfort and safety.** Your prosthetic socket is made for your body and designed to accommodate normal fluctuations in body weight and size. Maintaining a consistent body weight helps avoid potential discomfort, skin breakdowns, and pain of a too-tight prosthesis.



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