

Upper Limb Prosthesis Wear & Care Guide

Your upper limb prosthesis has been custom-designed to help you achieve your personal rehabilitation and functional goals. These instructions will help you learn how to put on your prosthesis, care for your skin, and clean your device. There are a variety of upper limb prosthesis types. In addition to these general instructions, you will also be provided with guidance specific to your prosthesis on a typical wearing schedule, treatment plan, and follow-up appointment schedule. If you have any questions about your prosthesis or care plan, please contact your prosthetist.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Your prosthetist will ensure your prosthesis fits well and that you feel comfortable putting it on and taking it off. Regular follow-up appointments are important to check the fit and function of your prosthesis, along with your ongoing rehabilitation goals. Please follow all instructions from your doctor, prosthetist, and therapist, as each person's prosthetic system is unique. Always feel free to speak with your prosthetist about any questions or concerns, and keep the following in mind:

- Be sure to increase wearing time with your new prosthesis gradually.
- If you notice any damage or unusual noises from your prosthesis, call our office as soon as possible.
- If you gain weight, lose weight, or the fit changes, make an appointment to check your fit.
- Visit your prosthetist every six months for a checkup, even if everything is going well.
- After receiving their prosthesis, most people find it helpful to work with a physical or occupational therapist to improve function. If you don't have a therapist working with your prosthesis, please notify your Hanger Clinic prosthetist, as they can often help you identify that assistance.
- Inform our office if you are moving so we can help you arrange for care at another of our more than 900 Hanger Clinic offices nationwide.



PUTTING ON AND REMOVING YOUR PROSTHESIS

Donning (putting on) and doffing (taking off) your prosthesis look very different depending on your type of device. Here are four methods for donning and doffing your prosthesis.

Push-In Style

- Depending on how your socket was fit, prior to pushing your residual limb in, it may be dry or covered with a thin lubricant, like hand sanitizer.
- Position the socket opening over your residual limb, making sure it is properly aligned.
- Gently push your limb into the socket, applying even pressure until you feel resistance and a secure connection.
- To remove the prosthesis, locate the release mechanism or button, or break the suction seal from the socket.
- Gently remove the prosthesis from your residual limb.

Pull-In Style

- To start, roll the donning sleeve over your residual limb. The donning sleeve minimizes friction as you pull your residual limb into the socket.
- Next, align the prosthesis by positioning the prosthetic socket opening over your residual limb and locating the pull-hole or valve opening.
- Guide the end of the donning sleeve into the pull-hole or valve opening, then gently slide your residual limb into the socket. Use a pulling motion on the end of the donning sleeve, working on small sections at a time.
- Once your limb is fully inserted and the donning sleeve is completely removed, you may re-insert the valve if necessary.
- To remove the prosthesis, locate the release mechanism or button, or break the suction seal from the socket.
- Gently remove the prosthesis from your residual limb.

Liner Style

- Clean and dry your residual limb before putting on the liner.
- Next, roll the liner onto your limb and avoid pulling, which can cause discomfort or damage to the liner.
- Ensure the liner is smooth against your skin with no wrinkles or creases.
- Depending on your prosthesis, you may need to engage a pin or locking mechanism to secure the prosthetic arm to the liner.
- If you have a pin or locking mechanism, to remove the prosthesis you may need to press a release button on the lock or remove any strapping.
- Then, gently roll the liner back down your residual limb, maintaining a smooth motion.



Sock-Fit Style

- To start, clean and dry your residual limb before putting on the sock.
- Next, start at the bottom of your limb and gradually pull the sock up, ensuring it is not too tight.
- Carefully position the prosthetic socket over your residual limb, making sure it is aligned correctly.
- Check for and smooth out any wrinkles in the sock to prevent discomfort.
- Additional socks can be added or removed as necessary.
- To remove the prosthesis, gently pull down on the socket and slowly slide the prosthesis off.

Gel Liners

If you have a gel liner, you will roll it directly onto your arm, touching your skin. Before applying the liner, your limb should be clean, dry, and free of lotions. Attention to detail is very important to ensure the proper fit of your prosthesis. To apply a gel liner, roll it inside out so the gel faces outward. Place the liner at the end of your residual limb and gently roll the liner on so that there are no wrinkles or trapped air. If your liner has a pin, be sure that it is lined up correctly with the end of your limb.

Suspension Sleeves

Suspension sleeves go on the outside of your socket and roll onto your arm.

Prosthetic Socks

Prosthetic socks help maintain the comfort and performance of your prosthesis. If you have been given prosthetic socks, you should add or remove them to adjust the fit as instructed by your prosthetist. Your residual limb may change in size and shape throughout the day or from day to day. Prosthetic socks can help you manage these changes.

These changes are expected due to activity, fluid retention, temperature, and weight changes. If your limb gets smaller over time, you may need to wear additional socks to fill the extra space and possibly get evaluated for a new socket. Once you reach 8 to 10 ply of socks, please see your prosthetist for an adjustment.

Add socks over the liner and not directly on the skin unless otherwise instructed. Socks should always be pulled fully and smoothly over the limb because wrinkles can cause abrasions or irritate the skin. If you have a locking liner, check that the sock is NOT wrapped around the pin, as this may cause the sock to get stuck in the lock.

When should you add a sock?

- Adding a sock can aid in limb comfort, protection, and suspension by increasing the tightness of the socket. A feeling of looseness, rotation, or visible gapping indicates that your limb is falling too far into the socket. If you continue to feel discomfort, please get in touch with your prosthetist.

Which sock should you add?

- Socks come in different thicknesses called “ply.” The color of the band at the top of the sock indicates its ply. Start by adding a 1-ply sock and increase the ply as needed. If you have added a sock, make sure that your limb still goes all the way into the prosthesis. Your socket should fit snugly to your limb. Socks can be worn in multiples. For example, wearing a green and a blue sock at the same time means the wearer has applied eight ply of socks.

When should you remove a sock?

- Remove a sock if your limb is not fitting all the way into the socket. Your arm or hand prosthesis will become a routine part of your everyday life. Your clinician will work with you on how to wear it properly and ensure the ideal fit.

WEARING SCHEDULE

Your prosthetist will provide a personalized break-in schedule to gradually increase the amount of time you spend in your new prosthesis each day. In general, we suggest you start wearing it for 1/2 to 1 hour in the morning and the afternoon on the first day and then increase the morning and afternoon wear time by 1 hour each day until you've reached a full day of wear. Be sure to check your skin after each wearing period. A typical wearing schedule may look something like this:

DAY	WEAR TIME
1	½ hour morning, ½ hour afternoon/evening
2	1 hour morning, 1 hour afternoon/evening
3	2 hours morning, 2 hours afternoon/evening
4	3 hours morning, 3 hours afternoon/evening
5	4 hours morning, 4 hours afternoon/evening
6	5 hours morning, 5 hours afternoon/evening
7	All day as desired.

SKIN CARE

Skin Inspection

It is very important to keep a close eye on your skin. Check your skin several times daily using a mirror to inspect your limb. If you see red areas that do not clear up within 30 minutes of removing your prosthesis, blisters, or broken skin, do not wear your prosthesis until you speak with your prosthetist or until your skin heals completely.

Sweat

Sweating is common, especially in hot weather. You may experience more sweating than usual at first. Don't worry; your body will typically adjust to produce less sweat when you wear your prosthesis. If sweating continues and you are concerned, talk to your prosthetist about recommended solutions.

Swelling

During the first few months to a year of prosthesis wear, your residual limb will go through a maturation period, sometimes shrinking or swelling. If you experience swelling, try wearing your shrinker when your prosthesis is off, including when you sleep.

CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Care of your prosthesis may vary based on your type of upper limb prosthesis. Here are some general care instructions.



General

In general, gently wipe down the exterior of the prosthesis and clean the socket with a soft cloth and warm, soapy water. Ensure the prosthesis is completely dry before storing or wearing it again. Regularly check for any signs of wear and tear, loose components, or frayed cables. Take precautions to prevent moisture from getting into the prosthesis, especially around charging ports or battery compartments if you have them.



Socket

Each day, you should wipe down both the inside and outside of your socket with a soft cloth to maintain cleanliness and extend the life of your prosthesis and supplies. You can clean the socket at night with soapy water or alcohol, leaving ample time for drying before using it again. Do not submerge in water, as most prostheses are NOT waterproof.



Socks and Shrinkers

Socks worn directly on the skin should be washed at least once a day to maintain good hygiene of the limb. Rotate socks so you do not wear out any one sock too quickly. Wash by hand with mild soap and water and lay flat to dry. Avoid wringing socks or placing them in the dryer, as this may wear out the elastic.



Body-Powered

You can typically use soap on a body-powered device. At the end of the day, wipe your prosthetic socket (the inside), rinse well to remove any soap residue, and then either use compressed air to dry it or let it dry in a way that any water can drain and evaporate completely.



Myoelectric

Inspect the prosthesis daily for worn or frayed areas, loose components, and cable issues. Before turning a myoelectric prosthesis off for the day, place the hand or terminal device in an open position. Remove and charge the batteries. If there is an internal battery, be sure the prosthesis is switched off and then plug it in to charge using the battery charging cord. When cleaning the myoelectric prosthesis, it is important not to submerge it or get it wet unless specifically indicated by your prosthetist.

- Use compressed air to clean the prosthesis and blow away dust and debris, if available.
- Wipe down electrodes and prosthesis with a soft cloth.
- Avoid getting moisture in or around the charging port or battery.
- Clean gloves daily or when soiled with a damp cloth or sponge, but avoid immersing them in water. Rubbing alcohol or a waterless hand sanitizer should also be used to eliminate bacteria. If you notice a crack in a glove, inform your prosthetist.

CONTROLLING YOUR PROSTHESIS

Depending on the components used in your prosthetic device, your Hanger Clinician will work with you and teach you how to control several important movements, including:

- Opening and closing the terminal device (hand)
- Rotating internally and externally
- Flexing or extending the elbow (higher level amputations)
- Flexing or extending the shoulder (higher level amputations)

With some of the more technologically advanced prosthetic systems, you'll learn how to control specific movements using various muscles throughout your upper body.





PEER SUPPORT

The Hanger Clinic AMPOWER® program provides people with peer mentorship, educational resources, and community events. Start today by speaking with one of over 1,000 trained peer mentors nationwide and connecting with over 7,500 others with similar experiences.

Call **1-844-AMPOWER** to learn more.

APPOINTMENT SCHEDULE

Your prosthetist will set a schedule to review your progress over the coming weeks and months. The chart below is an example of what your journey may look like.

APPOINTMENT	ACTIVITY
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about your needs and goals and obtain the necessary documents for insurance authorization. • Take an impression or measurements and a cast or scan of your residual limb
Diagnostic Socket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the fit of the prosthetic socket before making the final version
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit and adjust prosthesis • Demonstrate donning (putting on) and doffing (taking off) prosthesis • Review the wearing schedule, cleaning instructions, and follow-up schedule
Follow-Up Call	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that everything is going well and answer any additional questions
Follow-Up Appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing occupational and physical therapy • Make any adjustments • Review your prosthesis and rehabilitation goals

Your next appointment is on: _____

As you go through this journey, remember you are not alone.
Your clinician is available to answer your questions and would be happy to connect you with people in your area who have been through this process before.



To learn more, visit HangerClinic.com/UpperLimb