

# Below-Knee Prosthesis Wear & Care Guide

Your **below-knee prosthesis** has been custom designed to help you achieve your personal rehabilitation and mobility goals. These instructions will help you learn how to put on your prosthesis, care for your skin, and clean your device. You will also be provided with guidance 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 make sure that 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 gradually increase wearing time with your new prosthesis.
- 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 check-up, even if everything is going well.
- After receiving their prosthesis, most people find it helpful to work with a physical therapist to improve walking ability, balance, and conditioning.
- Inform our office if you are moving so we can help you arrange for care at another of our more than 875 Hanger Clinic offices nationwide.



## PUTTING ON YOUR PROSTHESIS

### Gel Liners

If you have a gel liner, you will roll it directly onto your leg touching your skin. Your limb should be clean, dry, and free of lotions before applying the liner. Attention to detail is very important to ensure proper fit of your prosthesis.

### Application of the Gel Liner

Roll the liner inside out completely so the gel is facing 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 thigh.

### Application of the Sleeve

Turn the sleeve inside-out over the socket so that half of the sleeve is in contact with the socket.

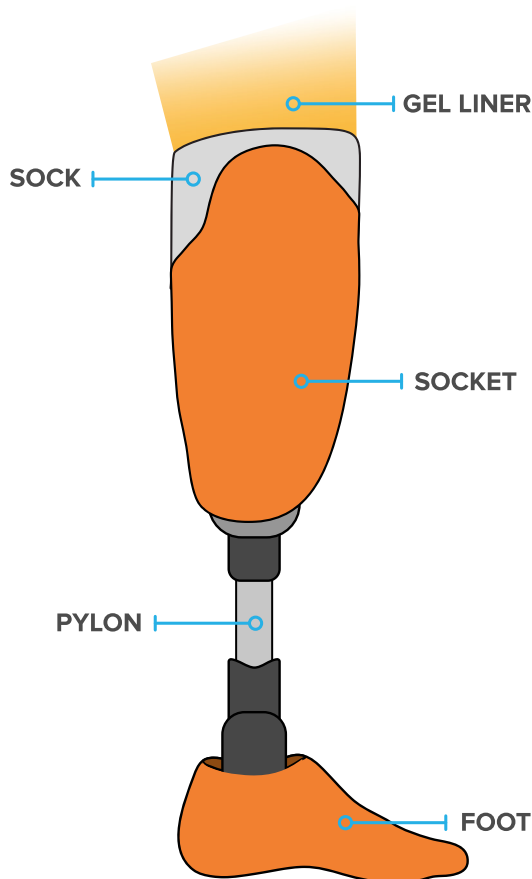
Place your limb into the socket. If there is excessive movement of the limb or space around your limb within the socket, use the appropriate amount of socks to adjust the volume. Gently roll the sleeve onto your thigh, making sure to eliminate all wrinkles. At least two inches of the sleeve should be in contact with your skin in order to hold proper suspension.

### 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 over the course of the day or from day-to-day. Prosthetic socks can help you manage these changes.

These changes are normal 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 it to get stuck in the lock.



It is a good idea to carry socks with you when you are out of the house in case of discomfort.

### When should you add a sock?

Adding a sock can aid in limb comfort, protection, and suspension by increasing the tightness of the socket. Signs that your limb is falling too far into the socket include:

- Pain at the bottom of your limb.
- A feeling of looseness, rotation, or visible gapping while standing.
- Your limb slides into the socket too quickly.
- Redness or tingling at the end of the limb after use.
- Your prosthesis suddenly feels too short.

If you continue to feel discomfort, please contact 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 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 snug 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 8 ply of socks.

THREAD COLOR	THICKNESS
White/Yellow	1-ply
Green	3-ply
Blue	5-ply

### When should you remove a sock?

Remove a sock if your limb is not getting all the way into the socket. You can tell if your leg is all the way in by where your knee cap is sitting compared to the top of the socket.



## 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, including sitting, standing, and walking time. 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 to 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	6 hours morning, 6 hours afternoon/evening
8	All day

## SKIN CARE

### Skin Inspection

It is very important to keep a close eye on your skin. Check your skin several times a day using a mirror to inspect the bottom of 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 normal at first. Don't worry, your body will typically adjust to produce less sweat as you adjust to wearing your prosthesis. If sweating continues and you are concerned, talk to your prosthetist about recommended solutions.

### Swelling

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

## CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS



### Liners and Sleeves

The gel portion of your liners and sleeves needs to be cleaned daily to prevent odors and bacteria growth. You may be given two liners to rotate every day so that you always have a clean, dry liner.

- We recommend washing the liner and your skin daily with a small amount of FungaSoap® or a liquid antibacterial soap. Turn the liner inside out and wash the gel side with warm water and soap using your hand or a soft wash cloth. Be careful not to rub or scrub too hard, which can damage the gel.
- Rinse well with a gentle stream of water but do not submerge it. Always hang or lay to dry with the fabric side facing out to prevent the gel from cracking. Once a week, you may wipe the gel of the liner with rubbing alcohol and a soft cloth.
- Handle your liner and other supplies with care to avoid tears and holes. Once you see or feel wear spots, contact your prosthetist.



### Socks and Shrinkers

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



### 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 again. Do not submerge in water as most prostheses are NOT waterproof.



### Shoes

Changing shoes can have a dramatic effect on how your prosthesis functions. Please do not change the shoes you wear until you bring all of the shoes you would like to wear to our office with your prosthesis so we can adjust the shoes to work properly with your prosthesis.





## PEER SUPPORT

The 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.

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

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/BK](https://HangerClinic.com/BK)



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INSTRUCTIONAL  
VIDEO

