

Preparing for Your First Appointment

WEAR A “SHRINKER”

A shrinker is a doctor-prescribed compression stocking that’s designed to apply even pressure to the bottom of your residual limb to improve the circulation of blood and control swelling. Your doctor will prescribe a shrinker wearing schedule for you to help relieve pain, speed healing, and prepare your limb for prosthetic fitting.



KEEP A CONSISTENT WEIGHT

The socket of your prosthesis (where it attaches to your body) will be custom-made to the exact shape of your limb. Your socket will fit more comfortably if your weight — and therefore the size and volume of your residual limb — remains consistent.

GOOD ALIGNMENT & MOVEMENT

Maintaining proper positioning and movement helps keep your muscles from tightening up and shortening, a condition known as

“contracture.” This can severely limit your range of motion. Good range of motion and proper alignment are both important to success with your prosthesis in the future.

To help maintain proper positioning, work with your physical or occupational therapist (PT/OT) as early as possible to develop stretching and strengthening exercises. Some additional tips:

- Keep your limb flat and straight. When seated, try not to let your limb hang or dangle.
- Laying on your stomach helps stretch the front hip muscles. Spend several sessions of at least 15-20 minutes each day on your belly.
- Don’t use pillows or blankets to prop up your residual limb.

PROTECTION FROM INJURY

Accidental injuries can happen. These accidents can be painful and delay your healing. To protect your residual limb, continue wearing your post-operative limb protector until advised to stop.

DESENSITIZE YOUR LIMB

After surgery, it is normal for the tissue in your residual limb to be sensitive. Desensitization helps your brain acclimate to the new sensory input it is receiving from your residual limb.

You may start with very light touches on your residual limb, massaging the entire limb area, then introducing different textures and slowly increasing pressure. In most cases, your physician, PT, and/or OT will prescribe a step-by-step, gradual desensitization process.



For more resources on adjusting to life with limb loss, scan the code or visit HangerClinic.com/LimbLoss.