

# AMPLITUDE

POWERFUL, PRACTICAL, AND POSITIVE LIVING WITH LIMB LOSS.

JULY/AUGUST 2015

## SHATTERING MYTHS AND STEREOTYPES ABOUT AMPUTEES

P 22

25TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE AMERICANS  
WITH DISABILITIES ACT P 14

SHOW-AND-TELL:  
AN AMPUTEE ENCOURAGES OTHERS  
TO CELEBRATE DIFFERENCES P 26

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# Singlehandedly Shattering Myths and Stereotypes About Amputees

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In 1994, at the age of 15, Brooke Artesi, CPO, CPed, CFom, was pulled under a passenger train while out with two of her friends. Artesi sustained serious injuries in the accident, which resulted in the loss of her right leg below the knee. And now, more than 20 years since the accident, Artesi hasn't allowed any of life's challenges to slow her down. In fact, they've only seemed to push her harder toward achieving success.

Artesi has a way of connecting with people. Her positivity, endless ambition, and outgoing personality earn the respect and attention of those around her. And it's these qualities that have helped her not only find professional success, but also cope with and manage the ongoing effects of her limb loss.

"It was just meant to be," Artesi says about her accident.

"While some people may try to hide their amputations, I've never really had a problem being myself. When someone treats me differently, or someone who isn't a patient asks me personal questions, I simply ignore it."

After earning a fine arts degree from the Fashion Institute of Technology, Artesi decided to change course and pursue a career that combined her love

for art and science. She went on to earn a bachelor's degree in biology with a minor in sculpture from Rutgers University and a postgraduate degree in prosthetics and orthotics from the University of Hartford's Newington Certificate Program.

Now, as a certified and licensed prosthetist, orthotist, pedorthist, and mastectomy fitter, Artesi owns and operates



Sunshine Prosthetics & Orthotics, Wayne, New Jersey. As an amputee, she says she's able to truly understand the needs and concerns of her patients while giving them the support they need to be their best. In addition, she credits her positivity for helping her build strong relationships with them. As a result of her focus on providing personalized guidance, her business has grown; not long after opening her practice in November 2012, she added a fabrication lab to customize, modify, and repair prosthetic and orthotic devices.

Although Artesi says that she enjoys the unexpected challenges and lessons that each day brings, she admits that some days can be chaotic and overwhelming. She's learned to combat daily stress by finding a healthy work-life balance, which includes yoga and weekly hikes with her son, Nicco, who was born just two months before she opened her business.

## Facing Myths and Stereotypes

While amputees face myths and stereotypes about their abilities to live independently, support their families, and have normal social lives and relationships, just to name a few, Artesi continues to shatter them, including those related to parenthood.

"People are worried about what they can't do as parents," says Artesi. "But every parent learns to adapt."

Artesi's healthcare team worked with her to help ensure she had a normal, healthy pregnancy. And while Nicco's birth brought great joy, it also meant she had to manage the effects pregnancy had on her body before and after she gave birth. For instance, walking became difficult near the end of her pregnancy, and she had to go to physical therapy after her son was born to work on muscle strength and regain proper balance. Another challenge Artesi faced was being

able to quickly put on her prosthetic limb to check on Nicco in the middle of the night.

"Having a baby is a whole new world for any parent," Artesi says. "You just figure it out."

## Striving for More


It's safe to say that Artesi pushes everyone to strive for more—including herself. That's why it was important for her to stay active after her accident. She gradually started training and competing in athletic events—including the Extremity Games, where she's won awards in rock climbing and kayaking.

"These days, I'm not out to prove anything," says Artesi, who mainly spon-

sors athletic events due to her busy schedule. "I just want to enjoy myself."

Now she mostly sticks with hiking and kayaking, and has a long-term goal of hiking the Appalachian Trail, which extends nearly 2,200 miles from Springer Mountain, Georgia, to Mount Katahdin, Maine, with Nicco when he's older.

Aside from the time she spends on her son, business, and recreational pursuits, Artesi also serves on the board of directors for the No Limits Limb Loss Foundation, as a volunteer adult amputee mentor for Camp No Limits, and as a certified peer visitor for the Amputee Coalition.

From pursuing higher education and running a business, to building a family, competing in athletics, and serving others, Artesi lives a successful, well-rounded life. Her example singlehandedly destroys the mistaken belief that people with limb differences can't excel in life. 

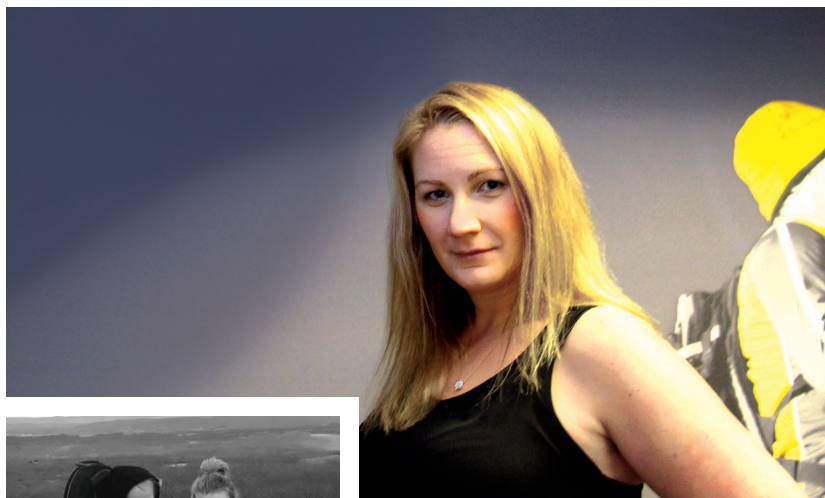


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