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Managing Your Prosthesis

These are some of the most frequently asked questions about managing a prosthesis. Please refer to them to save you time and concern .

My residual limb skin is chafing or dry - Oils and lotions such as mineral oil and Aloe Vera may be integrated within the gel liner to help prevent drying and chafing of the skin.

My stump is red (irritated) who should I call? If the stump has redness which **persists for more than 15 minutes** after removal of the prosthesis, call your physician or prosthetist. Have you been moisturizing it with mineral oil or aloe vera at night? (when you are not wearing your prosthesis) Have you rinsed your sock/liner thoroughly to make sure any detergent is removed. Even if you use a mild soap, any residue can cause irritation. Are you wearing the right thickness of sock? Is there air at the stump end of your liner when you put it on?

My socks are stretched – Have you been washing them daily (following the manufacturer’s recommendations)? Wearing a sock stretches it and perspiration hardens it. If you’re wearing a wool sock, let it “rest” for several days after washing so the fibers regain their natural resiliency and elasticity. Liners and shrinkers should be cleansed daily according to the manufacturer instructions.

I can’t put on the liner - How do I put on the liner? First, make sure the liner is turned inside-out. Place bottom of liner directly against the end of your residual limb and roll it completely up. Check to ensure that there are **no wrinkles/folds or trapped air** inside the liner. Place a prosthetic sock over the liner and slide your limb into the socket. It is **extremely important** that there is no air inside the liner. Trapped air will cause a suction in the socket (**negative pressure**) which can cause a painful bruising at the end of the stump.

One leg seems longer than the other - are you wearing the same heel height your prosthesis was adjusted for? Your prosthesis can be designed to accommodate any kind of shoe, athletic, casual, work, or dress. It will be fabricated for the heel height best suited for your daily activities. If you change your heel height, the prosthesis will not fit correctly.

My socket is loose - As you walk, the swelling and fluid in your limb will be pushed up and out of your limb and the socket will become looser. Ask yourself these questions: 1) Are you wearing the right thickness of socks/liner? 2) Have you lost weight? C) Is it cold? D) Have you increased your activity? E) Are you wearing your prosthetic longer? Increase your sock ply and see if it makes a difference. Socket fit should be snug.

It hurts when I walk—If the socket is too loose, your limb will “*bottom out*” and you will feel pain on the bottom of your limb and maybe further up. Add a sock and see if that helps. Socks will keep your limb from falling down too deep in the socket. This is important because reliefs have been made in the socket for sensitive bones, and if your limb is not in the right place in the socket, these bones will rub on the inside of the socket and cause pain and sores.

Another important reason why you may experience pain when you walk is because you are not walking enough. Increase your activity each day. You need to walk on it to get the most perfect fit for you. Your prosthetist can make adjustments as you begin to wear it and walk for longer periods of time. You will also learn what sock thicknesses you need. These may change during the day.

My socket is too tight - **(1)** have you been wearing your shrinker when you are not wearing your prosthesis? Shrinkers are used to reduce, control or prevent swelling. If your prosthetist gave you a shrinker, be sure you use it and use it correctly. Is your shrinker pulled up correctly? They should be snug enough to apply pressure to the soft end of the stump and looser at the thigh. Does your shrinker slide down while you are wearing it? Check it regularly. **(2)** Fluctuations in residual limb volume can occur throughout the day or from day to day. It can happen within a half hour of first donning your prosthesis in the morning. Adjust the thickness (ply) of your sock. Often, proper fit is maintained by selecting the proper prosthetic sock thickness (“ply”). You can combine different sock plies to thicken or thin the residual limb for fitting into the socket. Get the right volume without adding too many socks though, to avoid wrinkles. It’s better to wear a thicker sock than several thin socks. Wrinkles cause higher pressure in the wrinkle area and this can injure your skin. **(3)** hot weather - In hot and humid weather, the stump may swell. Holding it under cold shower water at the end of your shower may help. Immediately dry it off thoroughly and put on the prosthesis. In about 5-10 minutes, take off the prosthesis and then put it on again. Alternatively, wear the shrinker while you are out of bed for an additional 5-10 minutes and then put the prosthesis on.

I can't put on my liner - When you put (“don”) on your liner: (1) turn the liner inside out and grip it as shown below. Be sure the inside of the liner is clean, dry and free from any foreign objects that may cause skin irritation.



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(2) After exposing as much of the distal (closed) end of the liner as possible, position it against the residual limb (shown below) and with light compression, roll upward onto the limb. Check that no air pockets are present before continuing to step 3.



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(3) Roll the liner all the way up the limb, taking care not to damage it with fingernails. Do NOT tug or pull it.



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FOR ADDITIONAL ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS, VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

[SUNSHINEPANDO.COM/FAQS](https://www.sunshinepando.com/faqs)

How do I clean the liner? - Wash your liner inside and out everyday when you remove it. Wash it with a gentle soap—do NOT use bleach, fabric softener or cleaning solutions. After soaping, rinse it thoroughly to remove all soap residue. Dry inside and out with a lint-free cloth. Check for any signs of wear or damage. **Do NOT expose the liner to any glass or carbon fibers or other foreign particles;** they can become embedded in the liner and cause skin damage. If your liner is exposed to such foreign substances or chemicals, call your prosthetist. Do not put it on. **Do not expose the liner to excessive heat or sunlight.**

How should I clean the residual limb? - It is essential that you clean the residual limb daily with a mild liquid soap—fragrance and dye free. If the skin is dry, apply the recommended moisturizer. Do NOT apply the lotion immediately before donning the liner. Avoid exposure of the residual limb to household cleaners, perfumes, deodorants, alcohol, abrasives or soaps which may cause or contribute to skin irritation.