

SHRINKERS

For Below Knee Amputations

What is a Shrinker?

A Shrinker is an elastic sock that is made to control swelling, promote healing and assist in shaping your amputated leg. This will allow for a more consistent fit of your prosthesis (artificial leg).

When Are They Worn?

You will begin wearing a shrinker when healing of the incision is well underway.

They are worn at night time and any time when the prosthesis is not being used.

If you are not wearing a prosthesis, the shrinker should be worn both day and night with the exception of two 20 minute breaks, if desired.

How Are They Worn?

You will be fit for a shrinker by the Prosthetist.

To put on your shrinker, grasp both sides of it and pull it onto your residuum (stump) like you would pull a sock on your foot. You will have to grip towards the bottom of the shrinker in order to stretch the seam so that it is tight against the bottom of your residuum.

Make sure the elastic top does not roll down and keep the shrinker wrinkle-free as wrinkles can cause pressure and decrease circulation. The shrinker may slip off throughout the day, so you must continually pull it up to make sure it stays snug against the bottom of your residuum.

When you first start wearing a shrinker it will feel very tight. It is OK to remove it for a few minutes throughout the day until you get used to wearing it all day.

How do I Care for my shrinker?

You will be given two shrinkers so that you can wash one while you are wearing the other. They should be washed daily. Wash your shrinker by hand or in a washing machine (in a garment bag/pillow case on the gentle cycle). Use warm water (not hot) and a mild soap. Rinse well. Then, roll in a towel to remove the excess water and lay flat to dry.

DO NOT PLACE SHRINKERS IN THE DRYER.

How Should They Fit?

Shrinkers are fit according to the measurements of your residuum. If they become too tight (e.g. if you gain weight or tend to retain fluid), stop wearing the shrinker and contact your Prosthetist.

As you wear your shrinker it may stretch and begin to lose its elasticity. When this happens, the shrinker is not able to compress and shape your leg. You should contact your Prosthetist to be fit again.

When Can I Stop Wearing Shrinkers?

If you are not swelling at night

If at least 6 months has gone by since the fitting of your prosthesis, you can try one night without the shrinkers. If you can put on your prosthesis easily the next morning, you can trial not wearing the shrinker at night.

If the fit of the prosthesis is the same each day

The number of stump socks you wear for a comfortable fit in your prosthesis stays the same from one day to the next.

When you have no problems with swelling in your residuum, sound leg or hands/fingers

Do not throw out your shrinkers. Always keep them for use whenever you cannot wear your prosthesis for a few days.

How Long Will A Shrinker Last?

Shrinkers should last six to twelve months if cared for properly.

Weight gain, weight loss or a natural decrease in the size of the residual limb due to muscle shrinkage may mean a smaller or larger sized shrinker is required.