

# Is an artificial limb for you?



**Opcare**

**Enhancing your ability**

A brand of the AM Healthcare Group

A prosthetic limb isn't for everyone and needs to be carefully considered before being fitted. It takes a lot more energy and effort to walk with a prosthetic limb than with your own leg, so it might not be a realistic goal for you. The amount of energy required also increases depending on the level of amputation: the higher the amputation, the more energy you will need to walk. Your healthcare team will talk you through these considerations, and if you wish to try a prosthesis we will make every effort to support you in your goal.



Before speaking to your clinician, you should consider the following questions:

- ▶ *Is your other leg healthy?*
- ▶ *What was your activity level before amputation?*
- ▶ *What are your mobility goals?*

You should also take into account the following factors:

- ▶ *Excessive sweating can affect the fit of the prosthesis and lead to skin issues. Your skin will also be particularly fragile as it heals from the amputation.*
- ▶ *Your stump will change shape, particularly in the first 12 months, which will likely affect the fit of the prosthetic leg.*
- ▶ *Weakness in your stump and remaining leg may make using the prosthesis difficult over long periods of time.*
- ▶ *Whilst wearing a prosthetic limb aims to increase your mobility, it will also increase your risk of falling as you get used to wearing it. We will provide training for you to reduce this risk but there is an inherent increased risk with using an artificial limb which you should be aware of.*

If you feel a prosthetic limb is for you, the first step is to go into physiotherapy. In order for you to begin physiotherapy rehabilitation at the Specialist Mobility Centre, you must independently be able to:

- ▶ *Follow instructions and remember instructions between sessions.*
- ▶ *Move from lying down on a bed to sitting on the side of the bed.*
- ▶ *Transfer yourself from a bed to your wheelchair and vice versa.*
- ▶ *Transfer yourself from your wheelchair to a chair with arms and vice versa.*
- ▶ *Use your wheelchair independently. This includes moving yourself around, applying the brakes and moving your footplates whilst in the chair.*
- ▶ *Stand up on your own for 5 minutes within parallel bars (see below picture).*



Rehabilitation aids are designed to help primary amputees begin walking within the first few weeks after surgery.



The next stage after starting rehabilitation is to be measured for your prosthetic limb. This can be done in two ways – by having a plaster mould taken of your stump or being scanned by 3D shape capture technology. You must be able to complete the following tasks, with minimal supervision, to move onto this stage:

- ▶ Safely transfer from your wheelchair to standing in the parallel bars, both with and without the walking aid.
- ▶ Stand on your remaining leg for at least 10 minutes within parallel bars. You must also be able to stand on your remaining leg for at least 5 seconds without any upper body support.
- ▶ Put on the walking aid without any physical assistance.
- ▶ Stand for 30 seconds with walking aid, with no upper body support.
- ▶ Walk to the end of the parallel bars using the walking aid, turn, and walk back.
- ▶ Walk outside of the parallel bars using a walking aid for at least 10m.



Please visit [www.opcare.co.uk](http://www.opcare.co.uk) for more information or speak to your local GP.