

## LOWER EXTREMITY PROSTHETIC CARE GUIDE

### YOUR NEW PROSTHESIS

To obtain the best results from your new prosthesis, it is recommended that you start by wearing it on a regular, daily basis unless you have been instructed otherwise.

Confer with your doctor, therapist, and Prosthetist to determine the best time frame for you.

Notify our office at once if any redness indicating pressure marks lasts longer than approximately 20 to 30 minutes, particularly during this introductory period. Should you experience pain, other than the normal pressure of wearing a prosthesis, discontinue wearing the prosthesis, wrap your residual limb with an ACE bandage or shrinker, and call immediately to schedule an appointment. Frequent changes to clean prosthetic socks will keep you comfortable, especially if you experience excessive perspiration.

### HYGIENE

Daily washing of your residual limb and prosthetic socks is important. It is also advisable to wipe the inside of the prosthetic socket daily with a clean, damp cloth. The limb, socket, and socks should all be completely dry before redonning.

### HEEL HEIGHTS

Your prosthesis was designed for wear with shoes of a specific heel height. Heels that are higher or lower will alter prosthetic alignment and may cause stability problems. Always check with your Prosthetist before switching heel heights to ensure proper function and comfort. And, remember that your prosthesis should always be worn with shoes. If you want to wear shoes of various heel heights, make sure to mention that to your Prosthetist.

### PROSTHETIC SOCKS

The prosthetic socks you receive with both your temporary and definitive prostheses are an integral part of proper fit and comfort. Adjusting the number and ply of socks worn, and proper care of your prosthetic socks can make the difference between wearing the prosthesis properly or developing irritations.

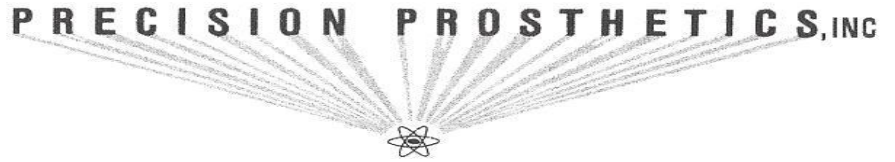
### PLY

Prosthetic socks come in a variety of materials, sizes, and thicknesses, ranging from one through eight. Characteristics of various plies include:

ONE PLY: Often called “cast or fitting socks,” these are the thinnest socks (though not as thin as a sheath), and are usually made of cotton. The bottom seam should be worn away from bony areas.

MULTI-PLY: This sock is made of wool, wool blend, synthetics, or cotton, and is approximately equal to the number of single ply socks indicated on the label.

Your Prosthetist will inform you of the proper ply you are to wear. If you are allergic to wool, tell your Prosthetist. Wool socks are commonly used since they maintain their shape, act as



a “wick” in absorbing perspiration, and keep an air cushion between skin and socket. When you first receive your socks, write down their size, length, and width at top and toe for reordering. It is also a good idea to write the ply number on the sock with a waterproof magic marker. This will help you to keep track of the ply of each sock.

If you are to wear a prosthetic sheath, its use will be explained by your Prosthetist.

*Record the following information:*

Sock Size \_\_\_\_\_ Sheath Size \_\_\_\_\_

Wool \_\_\_\_ Cotton \_\_\_\_ Blend \_\_\_\_

Sock Ply at Delivery # \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## PLY CHANGES

Different ply socks are provided to control residual limb volume fluctuations which can occur daily, or even from morning to night.

The following is a guide to ply changes relative to volume gain and loss:

### **VOLUME GAIN**

Possible Causes

- A. Overall body weight gain
- B. Heat
- C. Blood pressure
- D. Fluid retention
- E. Medication changes
- F. Decreased activity/Increased appetite
- G. Decrease in wearing time of prosthesis and/or shrinker
- H. Dermatitis

Potential Problems

- A. Leg feels too tight with sock or socks worn
- B. Improper fitting socket
- C. Pressure resulting in discomfort in new areas
- D. Pinching
- E. Leg seems taller
- F. Back pain
- G. Discomfort

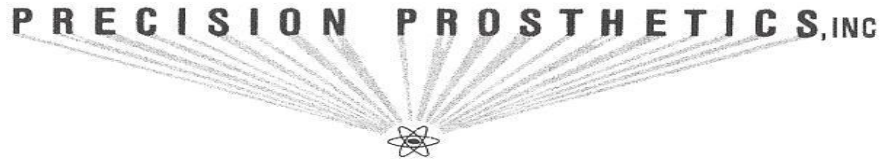
Solutions — Ply Change

Decrease sock ply for volume gain.

See Prosthetist

### **VOLUME LOSS**

Possible Causes



- A. Diuretics (such as blood pressure medication)
- B. Cold
- C. Increased activity
- D. Longer wearing time
- E. Overall body weight loss

#### Potential Problems

- A. Leg feels loose
- B. Pistoning (slipping of socket while walking)
- C. Greater pressure on bony areas
- D. Discomfort
- E. Leg seems shorter
- F. Back pain

#### Solutions — Ply Change

Increase sock ply for volume loss.

See Prosthetist

## ADJUSTING FOR A BETTER FIT

As you get accustomed to wearing your prosthesis, you will notice some fluctuation in the volume of your limb. In the case of slight swelling, generally in the morning, decrease your sock ply. To decrease the number of ply, start by subtracting one thickness at a time. EXAMPLE: If you are wearing a 3 ply sock, remove it and put on two 1 ply socks to reduce volume by one ply.

Continue until you fit into the socket comfortably without the limb feeling loose. Keep several ply with you at all times since you may need to add thickness during the day as your limb volume decreases. Additional ply will ensure a secure and comfortable fit.

To increase the number of ply, start by adding one thickness at a time. EXAMPLE: You are wearing 4 ply (a 3 ply and a 1 ply); remove those and put on a 5 ply sock. Continue until it seems that your residual limb is resting in the proper areas.

## WEARING YOUR NEW PROSTHESIS

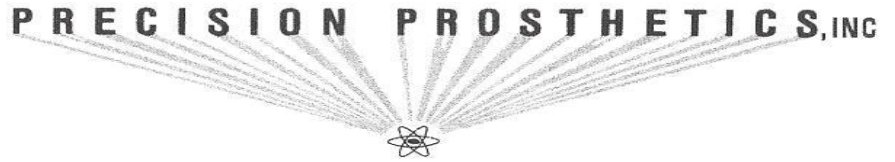
### Donning A Below Knee Prosthesis

1. Put on prosthetic nylon sheath (if provided)
2. Put on prosthetic sock(s)
3. Put on insert
4. Put on prosthesis

### Donning An Above Knee Prosthesis

1. Put on prosthetic sock(s) or nylon sheath
2. Put on prosthesis
3. Replace valve (if appropriate)

### Donning A Suction Socket Prosthesis



1. Put on pull sock or Ace bandage
2. Push downward into prosthesis, remove pull sock or Ace bandage completely, as shown by the Prosthetist
3. Replace valve
4. Press weight down into prosthesis while setting valve to release air, or adjusting lock mechanism on a silicone/gel suction socket.

## FOLLOW-UP CARE SCHEDULE

During the first year, regular follow-up visits are scheduled periodically. After that, maintenance and function checkups are usually made annually.

A typical schedule is a 2 week follow up, a 1 month follow up, and 3 month follow up, and then a follow up every 6 months. Be sure to set up follow up appointments with the administrative staff at the front desk, or call at 901-682-1006.

## CALL IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

It is always best to contact your prosthetist if questions arise about your prosthesis. Our staff is ready to answer your questions and eager to avert any problems before they interfere with the comfort and function that a custom-fabricated prosthesis was meant to provide. We're here to give you the best possible care, so don't hesitate to let us know how we may help.