

Doing things differently



Introduction: Embracing physical activity

Today, there are more opportunities than ever for amputees and individuals with limb differences to engage in movement, physical activity, and sports. Whether you're interested in participating alongside non-disabled individuals, joining a team of other disabled people, or working solo, there are countless activities to try. Most sports can be adapted to suit various needs and abilities, opening the door to a more active, fulfilling life.

Finding the right activity for you

1. Assessing your abilities and interests

Ask the following question to identify the activity and sports opportunities that work for you:

Evaluate your abilities: What are you currently able to do, and what are your limitations? Be honest with yourself and continue reassessing as you progress.

Your personal preferences: Do you enjoy solo activities or team sports? What are you interested in? Reflect on past activities or sports you enjoyed. Do not assume these are out of reach. LimbPower can offer guidance on how to “do things differently.”

2. Practical considerations

Equipment: Identify any prosthetic/s or activity specific equipment needed for your chosen activities.

Support system:

Determine if family, friends, or professionals are available to assist you. LimbPower can help you find professional support.

LimbPower tips for finding the right activity for you.

Stay open-minded: Many non-traditional activities, from horse riding to Nordic walking, are accessible for amputees. Joining a club or team is a great way to connect with others and improve your fitness.

Consider time: If time is limited, look for activities that fit into your daily routine, like home exercises, gardening, nearby gyms, dancing, or walking. Ask about LimbPower's free online exercise videos and live classes.

Try new activities: Exploring new options like yoga, gardening, or adapted sports can be beneficial as you aren't comparing what you can do now to what you could do before.

Consider what you enjoy: Different sports suit different abilities. For suggestions, connect with the LimbPower team or attend one of our annual events to try various activities with other amputees limb different individuals.

Travel: Can you travel to participate in the activity?

Time Commitment: What time do you have to commit to your activity?

3. Planning your participation

Scheduling:

When and where can you participate?

Transportation:

Explore options for getting to and from the activity.

Adaptive equipment:

Locate sources for any adaptive equipment you may need. Ask LimbPower if you need help sourcing equipment.

Budgeting:

Consider financial factors, including equipment, travel, or participation fees. Seek out possible discounts or financial assistance.

Talk to our sports development officers.

4. Goal Setting: Defining your path to success

Setting goals can help you stay motivated and track your progress:

Define your objectives:

Are you aiming to complete a push-up, lose weight, run a 10K, or join a team?

Break Down Big Goals:

Start with manageable steps. For instance, if you aim to complete a 5K, begin with walking once a week for 10 minutes, then gradually increase time and frequency.

5. Popular physical activities and how to get started

Need some inspiration? Below are some popular physical activities and how to get started.

1. Structured exercise (Gym or home-based)

Gym workouts:

There are 400 Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) accredited gyms nationwide offering adaptive equipment and advice.

Home workouts:

LimbPower's 12-week reVAMP programme includes adapted video classes tailored for individuals with limb differences and offers support from health experts.

Coordination and strength tools:

The ABC Toolkit supports balance, strength, conditioning, range of motion and improved prosthetic proficiency.

Doing things differently

– Continued



LimbPower Exercise and Fitness Disclaimer

Always consult your G.P., Rehabilitation Consultant or other health care professionals before starting any new exercise or fitness programme to determine if the programme is appropriate for your ability and your needs. This is especially true if you (or a family member) have a history of high blood pressure or heart disease. If you have ever experienced chest pains when exercising or have experienced chest pains in the past month when not engaged in physical activity, smoke, have high cholesterol, are obese, or have a bone or joint problem that could be made worse by a change in physical activity. Do not start this fitness programme if your G.P. or rehabilitation consultant or other health care professional has advised against it. Stop exercising immediately if you experience pain, discomfort, soreness in your sound or prosthetic (residual limb) fatigue, light-headedness, dizziness, headache, shortness of breath, blurred vision, nausea or sickness at any time while exercising. If something hurts, stop doing it.



Cost Concerns?

Contact your local Active Partnership for free or low-cost activities in your area. LimbPower also offers free daily online classes, from Paracise to strength training.

2. Walking

Walking is accessible, inexpensive, and low risk, improving cardiovascular health and mental wellbeing. It's vital for amputees and those with limb differences. Walking aids (e.g., crutches, walking sticks, poles) enhance balance, stability, and reduce strain, improving mobility and confidence. LimbPower's Nordic Walking Programme and Beyond Boundaries event support amputees' mobility and confidence in walking.

3. Cycling

Cycling boosts fitness and is a great mode of transport.

Adaptations Lower Limb: Cycling is particularly suitable for lower-limb amputees as it is non-weight bearing and bicycles can be adapted. If a bicycle doesn't work, options include tricycles, quad cycles, recumbents, and hand-cycles. Power-assisted bikes are also available.

Adaptations Upper Limb: On bicycles you can modify and move the handlebars and brake systems to ensure you have full control and safety while riding. Using prosthetic attachments or specialised grips can also help enhance your stability and comfort.

Indoor Options: Consider a static bike or a seated mini exercise bike if outdoor cycling isn't feasible.

Attend LimbPower's Cycling Clinics to try different bike types or explore options through the UK Cycle Scheme.

4. Running

Running is a popular exercise; however,

it may not be suitable for all amputees.

Below the knee amputees: For below the knee amputees there are feet available on the NHS suitable for jogging/running without the need for a running blade.

Above the knee amputees: the choice is more limited, however there are still options to support above the knee amputees to run. You will need to decide if you want to run with or without a knee joint.

Upper limb amputees: You can run without the need for any equipment. For balance and upper body fitness you can wear a prosthesis while running.

See LimbPower's running and athletics guides on our website
www.limbpower.com/resources

5. Adapted Sports

Some sports have been adapted to make them suitable and inclusive for disabled people, such as:

Wheelchair Sports: wheelchair basketball, wheelchair racing, wheelchair tennis, wheelchair rugby and wheelchair fencing.

Standing Sports: standing tennis, archery, cricket, disability bowls, crutch football and shooting.

Seated sports: sitting volleyball, horse-riding, archery and shooting

Walking Sports: Nordic walking, football, cricket, tennis and netball.

Visit the LimbPower website to find out which National Governing Bodies of Sports offer adapted sports and find out how you can get involved
www.limbpower.com/sports/our-sports

Overcoming Barriers

Overcoming the psychological barrier to taking part is a huge first step. Building a network of supportive friends, family, or

other individuals with amputations or limb differences can make a world of difference. Remember, amputees and individuals with limb differences of all abilities participate in physical activities and sports at different levels. Sport England fund National Governing Bodies of Sport, all of whom offer options for disabled individuals.

Common Misconceptions

Most Disability sports are wheelchair-based: FALSE. Of the 22 sports recommended by Parasport for single-leg amputees, only six involve wheelchairs.

You need a special prosthesis for sports: FALSE. There are many sports which can be enjoyed without a bespoke prosthesis such as archery, shooting, sailing, powerlifting, fencing, wheelchair basketball, table tennis, rowing, canoeing and swimming to name a few.

There are of course exceptions, for example an above the knee amputee will need specific components to be able to run and upper limb amputees will need bike adaptations to cycle. Discuss your activity requirements with your rehabilitation consultant or prosthetist, especially if adjustments are necessary.

Finding Clubs and Resources

To locate clubs or events nearby:

Every Body Moves:

Use the Every Body Moves website to find activities suitable for your level of amputation.

<https://everybodymoves.org.uk/>

National Governing Bodies:

Use the club finders on their website. Not all club finders will highlight which clubs are inclusive or offer adapted programmes. Always call in advance to check if the club can support you.