

# Practical Tips



**If you are working hard, either taking part in sport, an active leisure activity or kicking a ball around with the kids, it is essential to take extra care to avoid your stump getting sore.**

Make sure that you have adequate suspension. You may need that bit extra to stop the socket from rubbing or just to give you confidence that your leg will not fall off!

If you work out really hard, you will be surprised how much your stump can shrink, even if it has been stable for years. Take plenty of spare socks in your kit bag, to add if you need to. If you do shrink, your stump can then react by swelling up once you take your prosthesis off; so take a compression sock as well, to put on after your shower until you are ready to put your leg back on.

Save your newest and best socks for sport. Think of the pounding your stump will get on the court, pitch or track – it needs all the protection it can get.

If you get really sweaty, have enough socks to change into fresh, dry ones when you need to; that might be before you have finished. If you sweat and shrink, be prepared to add socks while you are playing.

Still sweaty? There are various preparations you can use to reduce the sweating. Unscented liquid talc is effective but difficult to find. The scent in anything you use could set off a skin reaction so avoid anything perfumed. Dri-Clor, Anhydrous Forte and Mitchum anti-perspirant contain aluminium chloride which actually stops the skin sweating; they work well but must be used with caution. You can get them in your High Street chemist – not cheap, but they do the trick. Using Hibiscrub as a skin wash may reduce

sweating as well as keeping the skin clean and avoiding infection. It is available from chemists or ask your GP. Patch test all of these first to make sure that they do not cause a skin reaction.

You may want to try nappy liners. Yes, unperfumed nappy liners carefully wrapped around your stump so that they do not bunch up and cause pressure and irritation. The moisture moves from your skin to the other side of the nappy liner and keeps the skin dry.

Take a blister kit, also available from your chemist, just in case the other precautions have not worked. If you get a sore/blister repeatedly in the same place, go and see your prosthetist. A slight adjustment may make all the difference.

Be prepared to fall over. You might not ever fall over but fear of falling could stop you achieving your best. If you can, try to land on your forearm, not your outstretched hand and then roll to the side.

Finally, warm, up properly. Yes I know that I am nagging but no-one ever does! A proper warm up and stretch will prevent injuries. Because you are an amputee, you will need to stretch your trunk side flexors specifically, whether you have an upper or lower limb amputation. Stand with your feet apart, raise your arm on the amputated side over your head, put your other hand on your hip and lean over to the non-amputated side. You should feel a really nice opening up sensation from your shoulder to your hip. Don't forget the other stretches for the rest of your body; arms, trunk and legs.

Contact your DSC physio or your prosthetist if you have any problems. Enjoy your sport!

Practical tips was Written by Penny Broomhead, Clinical Physiotherapy Specialist in Amputee and Prosthetic Rehabilitation, May 2012

Created by LimbPower October 2015  
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