



AMPUTEE TRAVEL TOOLKIT



Amputee Travel Toolkit



Travelling in the UK or abroad can be stressful even if you are non-disabled. Making sure you have everything you need in case of an emergency with your prosthesis or with your residual limb can remove some of this stress and help you plan for a trouble-free holiday. LimbPower's Physical Activity Adviser Poli Paterson has been researching what should be included in your Amputee Travel Toolkit.

We have spoken to healthcare professionals and amputees to provide you with this comprehensive, but not definitive list. In this leaflet are some handy items to have as a back-up when you are travelling away from home and your bodies or prosthesis need some TLC. If you already have a routine that works please don't change it, just be mindful that any changes in humidity or activity levels can lead to increased perspiration and changes in air conditions, routine and diet can change the volume of your residual limb and cause problems with your prosthetic fit.

Please bear in mind waiting times for appointments at your centre may vary and if alterations are needed to your limb you need to allow time for this, so start checks in advance.



Carry out a prosthesis M.O.T. before you travel

Before travelling it is worth checking your prosthesis for signs of damage or deterioration. Look out for wear, tears and cracks in the liner, especially around the seal. Check the prosthetic components, are there any loose parts or strange noises? If you have a suction socket check that the seal is working and not damaged. If you have a suspension system check it for wear and tear and remove any lint from the Velcro. If you notice anything wrong or if your prosthesis isn't fitting properly or you have discomfort it is worth visiting your prosthetist before you go on holiday.

Don't forget to clean your prosthetic socket, sleeve, liner and foot shell with mild, unscented soap or antibacterial soap before you go.

- Lower limb prosthesis
 - Check the knee and foot components
- Upper limb prosthesis
 - Check for wear in the cable and harness.

Travel kit for your prosthesis

Warning: if your prosthesis breaks whilst you're on holiday call your limb centre/prosthetist for advice as they may be able to put you in contact with the nearest prosthetic facility (see full list of people who

can help you at the end of this resource, appendix 1.). Currently (pre brexit) prosthesis can be repaired whilst abroad with a valid EHIC. You can request this information before you leave for your holiday.

Make sure to book in to see your prosthetist as soon as you can when you return from your holiday.

You may not need all the items listed below, so do edit the list to meet your needs. If you can think of anything extra to include please make sure to let us know. The items below can all fit inside a regular rucksack/bag or you can keep them in the car.

Universal Allen Key/Bicycle Multitool	In case a screw or bolt comes loose, multitools are useful as they have a mixture of allen keys, screwdrivers and wrenches and can be used not just for your prosthetic but for other items you use on holiday.
Shoe horn	If you need to change shoes or clean out your foot shell if you have been on the beach. Make sure to check with your prosthetist to see if your prosthesis is water proof before you go on your travels, as most prosthetics aren't.
Bottle of liner lubrication spray	Decant into travel size spray bottle. Ossur sell these or you can buy a reusable bottle from Boots/eBay.
Thin foam wedges	Handy if you have want to change shoes with slightly different heel heights. You should practice fitting these before you go.
Plastic bag	To help pulling clothes/shoes/boots over prosthesis if you don't have a waterproof foot and you may be going somewhere it could get splashed with water.
Travel size microfiber towel	If you need to take your liner off due to sweating, make sure to dry your residual limb/liner properly before putting the liner back on.
Small roll of Gaffer Tape/Duct Tape	Just in case part of your prosthetic breaks/cracks whilst you're out. NOTE this is a short-term fix and the equipment needs to be serviced, repaired or replaced ASAP.



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→ These items are for a temporary fix. You must see your prosthetist as soon as possible as all repairs must be done by your prosthetist.
If you are in the UK, you can go to any of

the NHS prosthetic service centers and ask for an emergency appointment (bear in mind you may have to sit and wait to be seen.) It is also worth contacting one of the private clinics if you are staying near one.

All of these are listed on the Limbless Association's website here <http://www.limbless-association.org/index.php/directory/nhs-disabled-services-centres>

Travel kit for your residual limb

<p>Small first aid kit including skin dressings</p>	<p>Blister plasters: Compeed blister patches are ideal. (Soaking it under water will make it less painful to remove and be careful as compeed plasters can take the skin with them on removal if you remove them before the skin has healed). Second skin dressings, micropore plasters, normal plasters and bandages just in case of cuts and grazes. Small pair of scissors.</p>
<p>Medications</p>	<p>If you take regular medications keep a back-up supply for your hand baggage just in case you should lose your luggage. Your regular pain medication (e.g. paracetamol).</p> <p>Take prescription medication and medicine from over the counter in its original packaging and/or a printed copy of your prescription. You could get a fine or go to prison if you travel with medicine that's illegal in another country – check with the embassy of the country you're going to before you travel. Visit the controlled drug list on the GOV.UK website https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/controlled-drugs-list--2</p>
<p>Anti-perspirants sprays, roll-ons or creams</p>	<p>Controlling sweating is a large part of preventing abrasions, blisters, rashes, skin breakdown and odour.</p>
<p>Creams and lotions</p>	<p>For example: Dermal 500 lotion, E45, Aloe Vera Gel, Lancane Gel. To keep your skin moisturised and prevent skin breakdown, liner rash etc. Decanter these into travel size bottles.</p>
<p>Antibacterial wipes</p>	<p>To clean your socket, liners and suspension sleeves. These must be cleaned daily especially in warm climates. You can use cleansing wipes to keep things clean but make sure to check that it won't irritate your skin.</p>
<p>Extra stump socks or liners</p>	<p>Make sure to take different ply socks with you as your volume will fluctuate from additional walking, different weather, exercise, eating different foods and drinking more alcohol. Some people find using sports socks over the residual limb helps in hot weathers.</p>





“I carry a small prosthetic toolkit with me when I go on holiday which includes a bike multitool, metal shoe horn, spare lubricant spray “pen” bottle, Velcro strap, Gaffa Tape and it cost me less than £20 max including the carry case”

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<p>Stump shrinker socks NB: these may not be suitable if you have existing heart/ circulation issues so check with your centre and only use compression</p>	<p>Activity If you have been out and about all day or taking part in activities your residual limb can swell. Make sure to check your limb when you take off your prosthetic/liner each day.</p> <p>Air Travel. The residual limb will often swell during a flight. This can be managed with a stump shrinker. If a limb is taken off during a long flight it may be a “challenge” to put the prosthesis back on (don) later.</p>
<p>Crutches</p>	<p>Many modern hotels and guest houses do not have baths and many showers have lips, so it is worth travelling with your crutches, if you don't want to shower sitting on the floor. If your prosthesis breaks and cannot be temporarily repaired, crutches will enable you to move around. Replace worn ferrules before you go and consider taking spares as sand and salt water will cause them to become brittle. They are pretty cheap to buy (shoe repair shops stock them) or ask your physio if they can order some for you.</p>
<p>Small dry paint brush</p>	<p>This is a simple way to get debris out of the prosthesis without risking damage to it.</p>
<p>Fold Up Step/Stool</p>	<p>If you are staying overnight, you may want to take a fold up step/stool just in case where you are staying does not have a shower stool or a fully adaptive bathroom.</p>
<p>Important numbers sheet</p>	<p>Create a sheet with important contact numbers for the prosthetic centre at home and the country you are visiting with information about your limb.</p>
<p>If you have an MP (Micro Processor – Knee or Ankle) Prosthesis</p>	<p>Make sure to pack a spare charger or batteries.</p>
<p>If your prosthesis is water proof</p>	<p>Sand and Salt water can breakdown the carbon fibre and the other prosthetic components so make sure to clean and rinse them well with tap water and dry thoroughly.</p>

General advice

Be careful when using hotel soaps and creams as they are highly perfumed, which could cause skin reactions so make sure to take your usual soap/cleanser that you use at home.

Temperature – Some functions and features of a prosthesis will alter dependent on the ambient temperature. Hydraulic and Pneumatic cylinders in particular function

slightly differently and electronics may not function below certain temperatures. This may mean your limb does not react the same at your normal walking speed, be ready to adapt to this and get advice from your prosthetist before you travel.

Sun exposure – keep your prosthesis away from direct sun exposure in hot climates some plastics can be prone to oxidation in the sun, which can make them more brittle, or soft and spongy. Sockets are made from

plastic and the heat from the sun can cause the shape of the socket to deform. This can cause a limping sensation as you sink into the prosthesis, if this happens find a cool place to take a break before any damage occurs to your residual limb. Also, be aware that any metal components can become very hot.

Sand and debris – Try to avoid getting bits of sand or dirt to get into the pin lock mechanism, as this can sometimes cause



“Remember you are allowed a carry on medical bag for all of your meds and prosthetic equipment”

→ them to jam. If this happens, don't be tempted to wash the prosthesis, you can wipe it down with anti-bacterial wipes and use a dry paint brush to get at crevasse.

Water exposure – Make sure you wrap the foot if you are going somewhere it could get splashed with water. Be careful with any mechanical parts, there are waterproof

bags you can buy (Design to cover casts) that can be used but are not designed to be submersed.

If you do happen to have a fall and damaged your prosthetic whilst you're away make sure to book in to see your prosthetist on your return home to get the prosthesis checked over properly.



Preparation, preparation, preparation

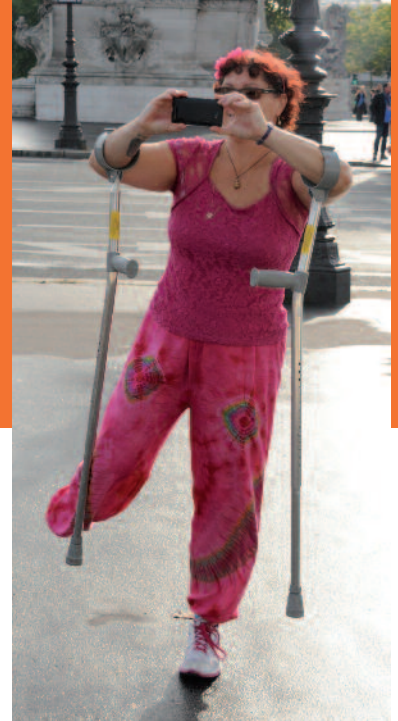
Before you travel think about your accessibility needs and plan well in advance to ensure there is time for everything to be organised.

Tips for travelling

<p>Insurance</p>	<p>Make sure you have sufficient travel insurance for your trip. If you have travel insurance as part of your bank account etc, make sure it is fully up to date with any changes in your medical condition such as medication etc. Make sure any equipment you will be using, such as your prosthetic/wheelchair is fully covered in the insurance schedule.</p>
<p>Booking your Flight</p>	<p>If available book bulkhead seating. They are seats at the front of a plane section facing a wall. Bulkhead seating has more leg room. Some airlines give priority to people with a disability so do ask! If the bulkhead seats are not available ask for an aisle seat, but not in the emergency exit row. If you have already paid for your flights, contact the airline and ask if they have priority seating for people with a disability.</p>
<p>Book assistance in advance</p>	<p>Even if you are very able, requesting assistance can be beneficial and make your transition through the airport smoother and stress free. You can request it when you book a flight or check in any baggage. Assistance is booked through the airline but run by the airport management company. It is advisable to book assistance in advance, as it might not be available on the day if other passengers who need assistance are flying. Wheelchair assistance will get you to the front of the line at customs, and if you have a leg prosthesis, it can also save you from a possible strenuous walk if you have to connect flights and/or if you are in a large airport.</p>



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“Wheelchairs must be insured and ensure that you book space for it at the time of booking”



Airport security

In proceeding through security at airports, it is common for security or customs agents to closely inspect your artificial limb. You will likely 'beep' going through the scanner (due to metal components in your artificial limb), and the agent will scan you with a wand to locate what the scanner is sensing. The agent may then pat up and down your artificial limb to check it. This may feel more intrusive than having your personal belongings inspected as an artificial limb is part of you. These experiences are the realities of travel in today's world, and we occasionally hear of amputees encountering different situations. The key point to remember is that any inspection done of your artificial limb should be respectful and within reason. If a child is being inspected, it is reasonable that the accompanying parent(s) be close by when this inspection is taking place. You are always entitled to ask to move to a private room or for searches to be done by someone of your gender.

Medications

If you take regular medications keep a back-up supply for your toolkit, just in case you should lose your luggage. Paracetamol for pain relief. Take prescription medication in its original packaging and/or a printed copy of your prescription.

During the Flight

Think twice before removing your prosthesis during a flight, as your residual limb may swell during the flight and you may have difficulty putting the prosthesis back on. If you do remove your prosthesis, use the drop-down table for support (below the knee). If you do take your prosthesis off, make sure you put it back on with plenty of time to spare before the flight lands. If you cannot get it back on, don't panic, just wait for other passengers to disembark, try again and push the call button. Airline staff are well trained and while they might not be able to get the limb on for you they will make sure you disembark safely.

Exercise during the Flight

Flying long distance can increase the risk of blood clots. For amputees with diabetes or other medical conditions the risk can be greater. To reduce your risk of a blood clot during your flight ask for seating with more leg room or an aisle seat and do in-flight exercises (clenching and releasing muscles in the whole body).

Go for regular walks around the cabin every hour, stretch your upper body, squeeze your bum muscles, roll your neck, do a full body roll down and Keep the blood flowing in your legs by doing a knee-bend, toe circles and foot tapping to keep your feet and legs active.

Drink water

Dehydration is increased in flight due to cabin pressure and air conditioning, it is particularly important for amputees to stay hydrated to ensure circulation can be maintained. Dehydration can cause you to feel tired and disoriented, it is worth noting that alcohol is particularly potent at altitude, as are the dehydration effects of caffeine and salt consumption. Try to avoid salty meals before your fly.



When travelling wear comfortable and loose clothing

It is advisable to wear comfortable and loose-fitting clothing so that you can show your prosthesis if required. It is also advisable to wear slip on shoes so that you can take them off easily if required to do so. Don't be afraid to ask for a seat if customs what to inspect your prosthesis or you need to take your shoes off.

Hotel

When reserving a hotel room, make sure to get as many details as possible — especially if you need a wheelchair-accessible room. First, ask to speak to someone who has actually been in the rooms and knows them well. As you are requesting information, avoid “yes” or “no” questions. If you can, get a room on or as close to the first floor as possible, as elevators are sometimes turned off during an emergency. Finally, before you check in, ask to see your room to make sure it's what you expected. It is worth asking the question “what you will do if the room is not suitable for my needs?” this will minimise the risk of it being an issue, but also give you the next steps if this does occur.

Transport to the hotel

If you drive an adapted vehicle you may have trouble hiring a car aboard, so it is worth planning for this and making sure that you have secured transport to your accommodation before you leave the UK.

Location accessibility

Think about what you are going to do for the rest of the holiday, how you are going to get there and how you are going to get about. For example; If the only way to the sea is a long stretch of sand and you are limited by sand, or if the main attraction is only available by self-drive and you cannot hire a car you may need to reconsider your destination.



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“Old towels or ones that aren’t fluffy are good to wipe sweat off the residual limb and dry out your liner”



Appendix 1:

People who should know where your nearest limb centre is abroad are:

- your limb centre in this country
- your hotel – they simply ask their local doctor or hospital for that info
- your tour guide - again they may have to enquire with hospital services locally
- you can do an online search for prosthetics facilities before you go
- ask the hospital services at the place where you are travelling to yourself about this – as long as you speak the local language.

EHIC customer services and travel insurers/house insurers should also be able to tell you where your nearest limb centre is if you ring due to an emergency that requires limb care.

Whilst it might not be information that they can recall at their fingertips they can certainly find out for you or let you know how to contact the right people to find out. 'Know before you go' is the best way to be prepared as far as your limbs are concerned.



Appendix 2:

RESOURCES

- **The DirectGov website** has excellent information for disabled travellers going abroad
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-for-disabled-people>
- **Visit Britain** has a guide for disabled travellers
<https://www.visitbritainshop.com/world/articles/disabled-travel-guide/>
- **Disabled Travel** advice offer expert advice for the disabled traveller
<http://www.disabledtraveladvice.co.uk>
- **National Rail** have a section on their website for disabled travellers.
http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/disabled_passengers.aspx
- **National Express Coaches** have a section on their website for disabled travellers
<https://www.nationalexpress.com/en/help/disabled-travellers>
- **Trip Advisor** have a forum for disabled travellers
https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowForum-g1-i12336_Traveling_With_Disabilities.html
- **Medici Travel** (0845 8800168) offer insurance cover for people with pre-existing medical conditions including those with disabilities.
www.medicitravel.com
- **Home and Medical** (05602 092641) sell travel wheelchairs, complete with travel bag, allowing it to be stored in the hold of any aircraft, weighing only 8.6kg.,
www.homeandmedical.co.uk
- **Access to Air Travel for Disabled Persons and Persons with Reduced Mobility** – Code of Practice
[webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.../accesstoairtravelfor-disabled.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/http://www.../accesstoairtravelfor-disabled.pdf)
- **Apparelized** has a good section on UK breaks for disabled travellers
www.apparelized.com/disabled_holidays
- **Disabled Access Holidays** (0845 257 0113) offer numerous destinations for those who want to venture further afield
www.disabledaccessholidays.com
- **Special Assistance – Gatwick Airport**
<https://www.gatwickairport.com/at-the-airport/passenger-services/special-assistance/>
- **Special assistance – Heathrow Airport**
<https://www.heathrow.com/airport-guide/special-assistance/how-to-get-help>
- **Special Assistance – Manchester Airport**
<http://www.manchesterairport.co.uk/at-the-airport/special-assistance/>

Travel checklist



Print this sheet and take it on holiday with you

Your limb centre name

Your limb centre telephone number

Your limb centre open hours

Name of the nearest limb centre to where you are staying

Telephone number

Email (if you don't speak the language)

Age of your prosthetic

Components (name) e.g. Foot, knee, elbow etc.

Component	Serial number
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Medical terms for any ailments and/or conditions you have

Where you are staying. Name and telephone number

Editorial

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