

# Accessories

## **Prosthetic Socks**

You might wear prosthetic socks over your residual limb inside the socket of your prosthesis. These socks are often made of knitted nylon, cotton, and/or wool and are shaped to fit your residual limb. Prosthetic socks add cushioning, reduce friction between the residual limb and the socket, and replace lost volume in the socket due to shrinking of the residual limb. They are available in many sizes and thicknesses.

Throughout your life the size and shape of your residual limb will change. Your residual limb will shrink significantly after the swelling from the surgery goes down and as your muscles atrophy. After this initial shrinking occurs, your residual limb will continue to change more gradually as your body ages and gains and loses weight.

To maintain a proper fit of your prosthesis as your residual limb changes, you will add or remove prosthetic socks. Prosthetic sock thickness is rated in “plies.” You can add a thin sock over an existing sock or replace an existing sock with a thicker one. By counting sock plies you can add thickness in measured amounts. If you are wearing a prosthetic sock and the socket feels a little loose, you simply add more ply. You can do this by adding more socks or adding one thicker sock. For example, if you are wearing a 3-ply sock and you want the socket to fit a little tighter, you could add a 1-ply sock for a total of 4-ply. If this still feels a little loose, you may either add another 1-ply (for a total of 5-ply) or you could remove the 3-ply and both of the 1-ply socks and don (put on) a 5-ply sock. It is better to wear a thicker sock than many thin socks to avoid getting wrinkles in the sock. Wrinkles cause higher pressure in the area of the wrinkle and can rub on and injure skin.

Your prosthetist may give you socks of varying plies so you can manage your socket fit. It is important to wear clean socks each day. Carefully follow the washing instructions that come with your prosthetic socks and keep the package or label from your socks so that when you need to replace your socks, you have a record of the type of socks you use.

## **Shoes**

The shoe is an important part of the prosthetic system due to shrinking of the residual limb. The prosthetic foot should fit snugly into the shoe, and the shoe should remain secure on the foot throughout the walking cycle. Shoes should always be chosen to fit your sound side foot comfortably. The artificial foot can be modified if the shoe doesn't fit properly, but your sound side foot may be injured if a poorly fitted shoe is worn.

The heel height of the shoe is of particular importance, because changes in heel height will alter the alignment of the prosthesis and make walking more difficult. Therefore, it is very important for you to stay with the same heel height that the prosthesis was made for. If you need to change heel heights, let your prosthetist know, and he/she can discuss the pros and cons of a prosthesis designed for use with multiple heel heights.

#### Skin Care/Aids

It is important to keep both your skin and the inside of the prosthetic socket clean. You should clean your residual limb daily with warm water and a mild, fragrance-free soap. The soap's fragrance left on your skin can sometimes cause a skin reaction in the closed environment of a prosthetic socket. The inside of the socket or liner, if used, should be wiped clean daily with warm water and a soapy cloth.