



**Discharge &
Hospital Prep**



**Travel
& Holidays**



Driving



**Prosthetics &
Mobility**



**Legal, Financial
& Practical**



**Before & After
Amputation**



LimbCare



**Mental Health
Social Challenge**



**Sports &
Leisure**



**School
& Education**



**Relationships
& Intimacy**



**Emergency
Situations**

FAQ'S FOR AMPUTEES

Guides to Support, Inform & Empower



STEEL BONES

FOR ALL AMPUTEES AND THEIR FAMILIES

Foreword by Lord Mackinlay

Losing a limb is a profound life change — one that challenges us not only physically, but emotionally and socially too. Yet, through that challenge can come new purpose, strength, and a renewed appreciation for what it means to live a meaningful life. I have found that amputation need not define or limit us; instead, it can open the door to new ways of living fully, contributing positively, and connecting deeply with others.

This FAQ guide from Steel Bones is a valuable companion for amputees and their families alike. It brings together clear, practical information to help navigate everything from daily living and mobility to emotional wellbeing and community support. Whether you are newly adjusting to life after amputation or many years along your journey, this guide offers insights and reassurance to help you adapt, grow, and thrive.

For families and loved ones, too, these pages provide understanding and direction — helping you support those close to you with confidence and compassion.

I commend Steel Bones for their tireless commitment to empowering amputees and their families. This resource is a testament to that mission: a helping hand to ensure that no one has to face amputation alone, and that every amputee can build a life of dignity, independence, and purpose.

Lord Mackinlay



HOSPITAL BAG CHECKLIST

For Amputation Surgery

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

- ☐ Hospital admission letter
- ☐ NHS/insurance details
- ☐ Contact numbers for family/friends
- ☐ ID (passport, driving licence)
- ☐ List of medications & doses
- ☐ Advance care plan or notes for staff

CLOTHING & COMFORT

- ☐ Loose, comfortable clothes (easy to put on and take off)
- ☐ Pyjamas or nightwear (shorts or wide-leg trousers can be easier post-surgery)
- ☐ Dressing gown & slippers (with non-slip soles)
- ☐ Underwear and socks
- ☐ Layered clothing (hospitals can feel warm or chilly)

TOILETRIES

- ☐ Toothbrush & toothpaste
- ☐ Soap/shower gel & deodorant
- ☐ Hairbrush/comb
- ☐ Towel & Flannel
- ☐ Wet wipes (handy if movement is limited)
- ☐ Glasses, hearing aids, dentures (with cases) if used
- ☐ Lip balm & moisturiser (hospitals can be dry)

ENTERTAINMENT & DISTRACTION

- ☐ Mobile phone & charger (long cable if possible)
- ☐ Headphones/earplugs (for noisy wards)
- ☐ Books, magazines, puzzle books, or tablet
- ☐ Notebook & pen (to jot down questions or reminders)

SNACKS & DRINKS

- ☐ Bottled water
- ☐ Sugar-free mints or sweets (helpful for dry mouth)
- ☐ Healthy snacks (nuts, dried fruit, biscuits) if allowed

MEDICAL & PRACTICAL ITEMS

- ☐ Any medications you currently take (in original packaging)
- ☐ Walking aids you already use (if advised to bring)
- ☐ A small cushion (for comfort/supporting your residual limb)
- ☐ Loose bag for laundry

PERSONAL COMFORT & SUPPORT

- ☐ Family photos or a small comfort item (helps morale)
- ☐ Earplugs & eye mask for better sleep
- ☐ Notebook of positive messages or affirmations
- ☐ Information about support groups (Steel Bones, Limb Power, Amputation Foundation, Blesma, Reach, Finding Your Feet)

TIP: PACK LIGHT — you'll likely be in hospital clothes for a while and space is limited. Bring essentials, but your family/friends can always bring extras later.

DISCHARGE & HOSPITAL RECOVERY

1. WHEN WILL I BE DISCHARGED FROM HOSPITAL?

Discharge depends on your overall recovery, wound healing, pain management, and your ability to manage daily tasks safely. Your healthcare team will agree a discharge plan with you and, if needed, your family or carers.

2. WHAT SUPPORT WILL I HAVE ONCE I LEAVE HOSPITAL?

You should be given a discharge plan that includes follow-up appointments, community nursing (if wound care is required), physiotherapy, and referrals to prosthetic or rehabilitation services. You may also be connected with social services, peer support groups, or charities that can help.

3. WILL I GET A PROSTHETIC LIMB STRAIGHT AWAY?

Not usually. Your residual limb needs time to heal before a prosthesis can be fitted. Initially, you may be provided with a wheelchair and mobility aids. A prosthetist will assess you at a limb centre once you are ready.

4. HOW WILL I MANAGE PAIN AFTER DISCHARGE?

Pain may be from healing tissue, phantom limb sensations, or from adjusting posture. Your doctor will prescribe medication and your physiotherapist may show you techniques for managing phantom pain. Report any changes or severe pain to your healthcare team.

5. WHAT EQUIPMENT MIGHT I NEED AT HOME?

Depending on your circumstances, you might be provided with:

- Wheelchair, walking aids, or crutches
- Grab rails, shower chairs, or commodes
- Pressure-relieving cushions or mattresses

An occupational therapist will usually assess your home before you leave hospital.

6. HOW CAN I PREPARE MY HOME FOR DISCHARGE?

- Clear pathways to move safely with aids or a wheelchair
- Arrange for any temporary ramps if needed
- Move essential items to easy-to-reach places
- Ask family or friends to support with shopping, meals, or chores initially

7. WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE PROBLEMS AT HOME?

Your discharge paperwork should list contact numbers for your hospital team, community nurse, GP, and prosthetic centre. For urgent concerns (such as infection or sudden pain), contact your GP or NHS 111 (or 999 in an emergency).

8. WHAT ABOUT EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT?

It's completely normal to experience a range of emotions after an amputation. Support is available through hospital psychology teams, peer support groups, counselling services, and charities specialising in amputee support. You are not alone.

9. CAN I RETURN TO WORK OR HOBBIES?

Yes – though this may take time and adaptation. Discuss your goals with your rehab team so they can support you with mobility training, prosthetics, or workplace adjustments. Employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments. Steel Bones provides a Job Support and Careers Counselling service please get in touch to find out more.

10. WHERE CAN I FIND EXTRA HELP AND ADVICE?

- Hospital or limb centre staff
- Your GP and community health team
- Charities such as Steel Bones, Limb Power, Reach, Amputation Foundation and Blesma
- Social services for benefits, mobility, and housing support

YOUR DISCHARGE CHECKLIST

- ☐ I know who to contact for medical concerns
- ☐ My pain medication and instructions are clear
- ☐ My home has been checked for accessibility
- ☐ Equipment has been arranged/delivered
- ☐ I have details of my follow-up appointments
- ☐ I know where to find emotional support

Disclaimer:

Information shared about prosthetics is for general awareness only. Every amputee's needs, circumstances, and goals are unique, and available options can vary widely between limb centres. Your prosthetist and physiotherapist are the key professionals who can advise what is appropriate for you. Always seek their guidance before making decisions about your prosthetic care, adjustments, or rehabilitation.



PROSTHETICS & MOBILITY

1. WHEN WILL I BE ABLE TO GET A PROSTHETIC LIMB?

This depends on your individual recovery. Typically, once your wound has healed and your residual limb has settled in size, your clinical team will refer you for an assessment.

The MDT (multi-disciplinary team) are making the decision on limb provision and future limb provision against mobility grade, vocation and daily life. Sometimes a physiotherapist will let you try walking on a pneumatic pylon or inflatable air limb which is inflated around your limb prior to getting a prosthetic. This will be for use in the hospital only but it's a great feeling to be back on your feet.

2. WHO DECIDES WHAT TYPE OF PROSTHETIC I GET?

A prosthetist at your local Limb Centre will assess your needs, lifestyle, and goals. They'll work with you to choose a prosthetic that's right for you. Sometimes a basic limb is provided as a first prosthetic to enable people to start progressing quickly and upgrades can be issued as your use of the prosthetic improves.

3. IS IT PAINFUL TO USE A PROSTHETIC?

Some discomfort is normal at first, as your body adjusts. However, a well-fitted prosthetic shouldn't cause ongoing pain. If you're struggling, we can help you speak to your Limb Centre or arrange peer support with someone who's been there. Lower Residual limbs are not naturally designed to accommodate weight bearing. The first three months are difficult for primary folk-blister, rubs and volume changes are common. Normally settles after 8 months. The rule is if you have a breakdown stop wearing the limb and consult your service or GP. Your service is prepared to see you as many times as required as stated.

4. WHAT IF I DECIDE NOT TO USE A PROSTHETIC LIMB?

That's completely your choice. Not everyone uses a prosthetic — some people use wheelchairs or mobility aids instead. What matters most is finding what helps you move with comfort and confidence.

5. WILL I BE ABLE TO WALK AGAIN?

Many amputees do walk again, either with a prosthetic or a mobility aid. It depends on your level of amputation, overall health, and rehabilitation. We're here to help you explore all mobility options and celebrate each step forward.

6. CAN I GET MORE THAN ONE PROSTHETIC – FOR DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES?

NHS guidelines state one limb provided per patient. We need a good clear clinical reason for a second limb. This will help establish good grounds and justification for the request when we apply.

7. HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO LEARN TO WALK WITH A PROSTHETIC?

It varies from person to person. Physiotherapy and practice are key. With support, most people make steady progress over a few weeks or months. Steel Bones can connect you with peers who've walked this road before.

8. ARE THERE COSTS INVOLVED IN GETTING A PROSTHETIC?

If you are treated on the NHS, your prosthetics are provided free of charge. However, private options are also available for those who wish to explore alternatives. We can help you understand both routes.

9. WHAT HAPPENS IF MY PROSTHETIC DOESN'T FIT WELL OR CAUSES ISSUES?

Let your Limb Centre know as soon as possible — don't suffer in silence. They can adjust or remake the socket to improve comfort. Steel Bones can also help you advocate for timely adjustments if needed. Skin is a living organ. Please doff your limb 2-3 times a day and dry with a flannel or towel. This will allow the skin to breathe for 10-15 minutes.

10. HOW OFTEN WILL I NEED TO VISIT A PROSTHETICS CENTRE?

There is likely to be several visits when your first ready for your first prosthetic limb. The process varies from person to person but a cast is made of your residual limb which is used to make a custom socket to attach you to the prosthetic limb. There will then be the other parts added and adjusted to fit your particular needs. It is quite common to need several adjustments and new sockets as your limb swelling reduces and you get used to your prosthetic. Over time you will need to visit far less mostly due to wear and tear on your prosthetic limb.

11. CAN STEEL BONES HELP ME WITH MOBILITY ISSUES BEYOND PROSTHETICS?

Yes! We can support you in getting the right aids, equipment, and home adaptations. We also run events and peer groups where you can learn tips and tricks from others living with limb loss.



DAILY LIFE & ADAPTATION

1. HOW CAN I ADAPT MY HOME AFTER AMPUTATION?

We recommend starting with an occupational therapist assessment. Common adaptations include grab rails, ramps, stairlifts, steps and accessible bathrooms. Other things can be added that help around the home but do not need permanent changes such as perching stools, shower stools and toilet frames which make life easier. The occupational therapist should be able to organise these for you free of charge.

2. WHAT MOBILITY AIDS ARE AVAILABLE, AND HOW DO I ACCESS THEM?

Mobility aids include prosthetics, wheelchairs, crutches, and walkers. Your rehabilitation team or GP can refer you to your local limb centre or physiotherapy services for assessment and provision. Electric wheelchairs can also be organised via Motability for people who receive the PIP mobility element. Details are available here <https://www.motability.co.uk/whats-available/scooters-wheelchairs/wheelchairs/>. Alternatively electric wheelchairs can be purchased or if you would like further advice, please speak to us at <https://steelbone.co.uk/contact/>

3. HOW DO I MANAGE PHANTOM LIMB PAIN OR OTHER POST-AMPUTATION DISCOMFORT?

Phantom pain is common and treatable. Techniques include mirror therapy, medications, physiotherapy, and psychological support. Speak with your limb centre or pain clinic for personalised help. More in-depth information is available on a Steel Bones podcast located at www.youtube.com/watch?v=nt3E5LnuYM4&si=S8HSW9LDJZ8N_PhM

4. CAN I RETURN TO WORK AFTER AMPUTATION?

Yes, many amputees return to work. We can help you explore reasonable adjustments, rights under the Equality Act, and support from Access to Work. Should you need to or want to change career steel bones offer a careers service that help with all the steps from helping you decide what you want to do through all advice on all of the steps in helping get new employment. Further details can be found here Steel bones careers podcast

5. HOW DO I DEAL WITH PUBLIC REACTIONS OR QUESTIONS ABOUT MY LIMB LOSS?

It's normal to feel unsure at first. Some people find it helpful to prepare a few responses, such as "Yes, I've had an amputation. It's been a big change, but I'm adapting day by day. I'm happy to talk about it if you have questions" or something similar. Peer support from others who've experienced this can be

invaluable so if you feel unsure join one of our coffee or online catch ups. We have all been through amputation and a similar journey.

6. WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE FOR MY FAMILY AND CHILDREN?

Many families find it more difficult to cope with the amputation than the amputee. We offer a Family Support Programme, resources for children, and peer support for spouses and carers. You're not alone—many families find reassurance and guidance from talking with others for more details please get in touch at <https://steelbone.co.uk/contact/>. We are friendly and always happy to talk no matter how trivial your question is.

7. HOW DO I STAY ACTIVE AND EXERCISE SAFELY AS AN AMPUTEE?

There are many ways to stay active, from adapted sports to gentle home exercises. Your physio can guide you, and Steel Bones and other charities offer activity days and local gym sessions.

8. ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS OR FINANCIAL SUPPORT SCHEMES AVAILABLE?

Yes. You may be eligible for Personal Independence Payment (PIP), blue badges, travel concessions, equipment grants and other benefits. The PIP process is complex and we recommend that you do not apply for PIP until you have spoken to the Steel bones benefits advice team. We can guide you through applications and appeals if needed.

9. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY PROSTHETIC DOESN'T FIT PROPERLY OR CAUSES PAIN?

For the first year or two after amputation your stump will change shape as the swelling goes down and it will cause pain and impact how well you can walk. Contact your prosthetist or limb centre immediately. A poor fit can cause long-term issues. A prosthetist will do their best to help you but you need to tell them if your prosthetic feels painful or awkward in any way and usually they can fix the issue. Do not accept something that feels wrong.



SUPPORT & COMMUNITY

1. WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT DOES STEEL BONES OFFER FOR AMPUTEES AND THEIR FAMILIES?

Where the NHS support ends Steel Bones will with the rest of your journey. We offer a range of support including peer mentoring, family support packs, community events, and guidance with housing, employment, and benefits. We are either amputees or their family members and have a wealth of experience to help you.

2. HOW CAN I CONNECT WITH OTHER AMPUTEES OR FAMILIES IN SIMILAR SITUATIONS?

You can join our free Facebook group, attend local meet-ups, or take part in our events throughout the year. We also offer 1-to-1 connections with peer mentors who've been through it themselves. We also offer days out where you can spend time with others on an activity.

3. IS THERE SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR SPOUSES, CHILDREN, OR CARERS?

Yes. We understand that amputation affects the whole family. We offer support for family members, including emotional support, activity days, and help with navigating changes in daily life.

4. I FEEL VERY ISOLATED SINCE MY AMPUTATION. WHAT CAN I DO?

You're not alone. Many amputees feel this way at first. Steel Bones can help you build connections with people who truly understand. We can help with online groups via Facebook and WhatsApp and hold get togethers both online and in person at coffee meet ups. If you need to speak to someone just pick up the phone to us.

5. DO I HAVE TO BE A RECENT AMPUTEE TO JOIN STEEL BONES?

Not at all. We support anyone affected by limb loss—whether your amputation was recent or many years ago. It's never too late to seek connection, support, or advice. Many people enjoy the social aspect of joining steel bones as well as the advice services that we offer. Steel Bones is for the entire family so family members often register first. All are welcome and we are a fully inclusive community no matter what your background, race, beliefs providing you adhere to our Mutual respect code you will find support at Steel Bones.

6. HOW DO I JOIN STEEL BONES OR GET INVOLVED?

Joining is simple—just fill out our online registration form here or get in touch with us. Once you're registered, you can access our support services and stay updated on events and opportunities.

7. CAN I VOLUNTEER WITH STEEL BONES OR HELP OTHERS LIKE ME?

Yes, we would love to hear from you. All of our mentors and supporters are amputees or family members who want to give back. We offer training and ongoing support to help you make a difference in someone else's journey.

8. WHAT KINDS OF EVENTS DO YOU RUN?

We host family days, amputee meet-ups, awareness events, and online support sessions. They're all about connection, encouragement, and creating a strong, supportive community.

9. IS STEEL BONES SUPPORT FREE TO ACCESS?

Yes. All our support services are free for amputees and their families. We're a registered charity funded by the national lottery, Children in need and others as well as donations and fundraising efforts.

10. WHAT IF I'M NOT READY TO TALK YET?

That's okay. You're welcome to explore our resources at your own pace. When you're ready, we're here — whether you want to talk, meet others, or just feel less alone.

MENTAL HEALTH & SOCIAL CHALLENGES

1. IS IT NORMAL TO FEEL LOW OR ANXIOUS AFTER AMPUTATION?

Yes. Many amputees experience sadness, grief, anxiety, or frustration as part of adjusting. It's a big life change. These feelings are normal, and support is available.

2. HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO “MENTALLY ADJUST” AFTER AMPUTATION?

There's no set timeline. Some people find their new rhythm quickly; others may take months or years. Healing is not linear—ups and downs are part of the process.

3. WHAT ARE COMMON MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES AMPUTEES FACE?

- Grief over limb loss
- Body image or confidence concerns
- Phantom pain and its emotional impact
- Anxiety about mobility, falls, or independence
- Social isolation or feeling misunderstood
- Financial worries and concerns
- Housing worries and concerns



4. WHO CAN I TALK TO IF I'M STRUGGLING?

Your GP (they can refer to counselling or support services)
Your limb centre team (prosthetist, physiotherapist, psychologist)
Charities & peer groups like Steel Bones, LimbPower, and others
Mental health professionals (counsellors, therapists)

5. DOES TALKING TO OTHER AMPUTEES HELP?

Most people say yes. Peer support provides reassurance, shared tips, and the sense you're not alone. Many find hope by seeing how others live full, active lives.

6. WHAT CAN I DO DAY-TO-DAY TO SUPPORT MY MENTAL WELLBEING?

- Keep a routine (meals, sleep, activity)
- Stay socially connected (family, friends, groups)
- Try gentle physical activity when possible
- Practise relaxation or mindfulness techniques
- Celebrate small wins and progress

7. WHAT IF I DON'T FEEL READY TO SEEK HELP?

That's okay. Sometimes just reading others' stories or attending a group as a listener is a first step. Support is there when you're ready.

8. WHEN SHOULD I SEEK URGENT HELP?

If you ever feel overwhelmed, hopeless, or think about harming yourself, seek help immediately:

- Call 999 (UK) in an emergency
- Call Samaritans on 116 123 (UK) - free, 24/7
- Call 111 option 2 for mental health nurses
- Reach out to your GP or crisis team urgently

Remember: Everyone's journey is different. There's no "right" way to cope. Be kind to yourself, lean on your support network, and don't be afraid to ask for help.

EMAIL HELLO@STEELBONE.CO.UK
OR CALL US ON
03333 606 930
WWW.STEELBONESUK.CO.UK



LIMBCARE

1. WHY IS LIMB CARE IMPORTANT?

Good limb (residual limb/stump) care helps prevent skin problems, infections, and discomfort. It also improves prosthetic comfort and mobility.

2. HOW OFTEN SHOULD I WASH MY LIMB?

Daily, ideally once in the evening after removing your prosthesis. Use warm water and mild, fragrance-free soap. Make sure the limb is completely dry before putting the prosthesis back on.

3. WHAT SHOULD I CHECK FOR WHEN INSPECTING MY SKIN?

Look out for:

Redness that doesn't fade after 20–30 minutes

Blisters or open sores

Swelling, rashes, or spots

Changes in skin temperature

If you notice persistent problems, contact your prosthetist, GP, or limb centre.

4. HOW DO I MANAGE SWEATING INSIDE THE SOCKET?

Wash the limb and liner daily

Use a clean liner or sock each day

Talk to your prosthetist about antiperspirants designed for sensitive skin or alternative liners if sweating is severe

5. SHOULD I MOISTURISE MY LIMB?

Yes—but only at night before bed, not before wearing your prosthesis (creams can soften skin too much and increase friction). Use a gentle, non-perfumed moisturiser.

6. HOW DO I CARE FOR CUTS, SPOTS, OR RASHES?

Clean gently with mild soap and water. Keep the area dry and avoid wearing the prosthesis until it heals, if painful. Seek medical advice if it worsens or shows signs of infection (heat, swelling, pus).

7. DO I NEED TO WRAP OR SHRINK MY LIMB?

After surgery, you may be taught to use a shrinker sock or bandaging to help shape your limb and control swelling. Always follow your physiotherapist's and prosthetist's instructions—don't improvise.

Keep it somewhere safe, cool, and dry. Do not leave it on a radiator or in direct sunlight. Clean liners and socks daily.



9. WHAT IF I GET PHANTOM LIMB PAIN?

Many amputees experience this. Gentle massage, relaxation techniques, or wearing the prosthesis can help. Speak to your care team for pain management strategies and medical options.

10. WHO SHOULD I ASK IF I'M UNSURE?

Your prosthetist and physiotherapist are the best people to guide you. Every limb and socket is different, so follow their tailored advice.

Important Disclaimer:

These FAQs are for general guidance only. Every amputee's needs vary, and limb centres may recommend different routines. Always follow the advice of your prosthetist, physiotherapist, or healthcare team.

SPORTS & LEISURE

1. WHY IS EXERCISE IMPORTANT FOR AMPUTEES?

Regular physical activity enhances overall health and helps you live longer. Exercise boosts mood, increases energy, improves confidence, and supports a healthy weight — which is essential for prosthetic fit and comfort. It's also a great way to socialise and connect with others who share similar experiences.

If you haven't been active for a while, start small and set realistic expectations. Even light exercise — such as walking in nature or joining a group activity — can make a big difference.

2. NEED HELP GETTING STARTED?

Talk to LimbPower's reVAMP team, our Sports Development Officers, or your limb centre physiotherapist for personalised advice.

3. HOW DO I FIND THE RIGHT ACTIVITY FOR ME?

Begin by assessing your physical abilities and interests:

- What movements feel comfortable?
- Do you prefer solo or group activities?
- What sports or exercises have you enjoyed before?
- Also consider practical factors:
- Do you need a specific prosthetic or adaptive equipment?
- Is the activity accessible in terms of location and transport?

- How much time can you realistically dedicate?

A supportive network of family, friends, and professionals can help you stay motivated and make your chosen activity more enjoyable.

4. HOW CAN I PLAN FOR SUCCESS?

Goal-setting is key. Start small, celebrate achievements, and gradually build up. Examples include:

- Walking for 10 minutes a day before working up to a 5K
- Joining a local sports club
- Building strength and balance through specific exercises
- Many activities can be adapted for amputees:
- Walking/Nordic walking – great for cardiovascular health and stability
- Cycling – try hand cycles, recumbent, or power-assisted bikes
- Running – possible with specialist prosthetic feet or knees
- Gym workouts – inclusive gyms offer adaptive equipment and tailored plans
- Adaptive sports – such as wheelchair basketball, archery, and sitting volleyball

LimbPower's 12-week reVAMP programme provides structured, personalised support for those wanting a confident start.

5. WHAT BARRIERS MIGHT I FACE — AND HOW CAN I OVERCOME THEM?

Amputees often face physical, psychological, and social barriers to being active. LimbPower helps remove these by:

- Offering free online classes, workshops, and low-cost programmes
- Connecting participants to adaptive sports clubs and specialist coaches
- Sharing accessible transport tips and equipment guides
- Working with healthcare providers to ensure prosthetic comfort

Our community-based approach builds confidence, supports skill development, and fosters inclusion. Whether you're starting rehab, joining local activities, or training for competition, LimbPower provides pathways for every level.

Joining regional groups or attending LimbPower events is a great way to meet others and feel part of a supportive community.

6. WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED?

Physical activity doesn't have to mean long workouts. Try breaking movement into short sessions, such as:

- A 10-minute walk
- 15 minutes of strength training
- A 10-minute cycle



The NHS recommends aiming for:

- 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity per week (e.g. brisk walking, swimming)
- Two strength sessions per week targeting major muscle groups
- Balance and flexibility training to improve mobility and reduce fall risk

HELPFUL RESOURCES INCLUDE:

- Every Body Moves – find accessible sports and clubs near you
- LimbPower events – try new activities and meet others
- LimbPower YouTube channel – free exercise videos and fitness classes
- Ottobock Fitness App – personalised training for amputees

Physical activity is possible, beneficial, and empowering for every amputee or person with a limb difference. Whether it's walking, cycling, running, or team sports – start small, build confidence, and enjoy the journey. Movement is for everyone – find what works for you and embrace it!

Disclaimer

Always consult your G.P., Rehabilitation Consultant or other health care professionals before starting any new exercise or fitness program 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.

**STEEL BONES: HELPING
AMPUTEE FAMILIES
LIVE LIFE TO THE FULL**



HOUSING & ACCESSIBILITY

Supporting you to feel safe, confident, and independent at home.

MAKING A HOME ACCESSIBLE

HOW CAN I ADAPT MY HOME AFTER AMPUTATION?

Start with an occupational therapist (OT) assessment through your local council or NHS. They'll recommend essential adaptations based on your mobility, daily routines, and long-term needs.

WILL I NEED A STAIRLIFT, WET ROOM, OR RAMPS?

It depends on your individual situation. OTs may recommend:

- Stairlifts if your bedroom/bathroom is upstairs
- Wet rooms or level-access showers for easier washing
- Ramps or threshold strips if using a wheelchair or walking aid

CAN I GET HELP WITH BATHROOM ADAPTATIONS?

Yes, you may qualify for support through your local authority, especially if recommended by an OT. You can also apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) in England, Wales, or Northern Ireland.

WHAT MODIFICATIONS ARE MOST HELPFUL?

ARE GRAB RAILS AND NON-SLIP FLOORING ESSENTIAL?

They can make a big difference. Grab rails by toilets, beds, and stairs provide stability, while non-slip flooring in wet areas reduces fall risk.

DO I NEED A WALK-IN SHOWER OR BATH LIFT?

Walk-in showers with a seat are safer for most amputees. If you prefer a bath, a bath lift may be an easier and less expensive alternative.

WHAT CHANGES CAN HELP WITH ENERGY LEVELS?

- Lowering kitchen worktops for seated use
 - Organising items at reachable heights
 - Installing perching stools in the kitchen or bathroom
- All of these reduce strain and preserve energy.

CAN I MAKE TEMPORARY CHANGES WHILE I RECOVER?

Yes. Temporary ramps, portable shower stools, handheld shower heads, and raised toilet seats are affordable and easy to install. These help you stay independent as your needs evolve.

PAYING FOR HOUSING ADAPTATIONS

CAN I GET A DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT?

Yes, in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, DFGs are available to help with major adaptations. They're means-tested, but many people qualify for full or partial funding.

DOES THE COUNCIL HELP WITH RAMPS OR WET ROOMS?

Yes — local councils can fund or install adaptations recommended by an OT. Apply through your Adult Social Care team.

WHAT IF I RENT — CAN I STILL GET ADAPTATIONS?

Yes. Tenants have the right to request reasonable adjustments. Landlords must have a valid reason to refuse, especially for safety-critical changes. Always seek permission in writing and involve your OT or social worker if needed.

ARE THERE CHARITIES OR ORGANISATIONS THAT HELP FUND ADAPTATIONS?

Yes. Organisations like:

- Turn2Us
- The ACT Foundation
- SSAFA (for veterans)
- Steel Bones can help with finding funding or sourcing equipment.

RIGHTS & LEGAL SUPPORT

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS A DISABLED TENANT OR HOMEOWNER?

Under the Equality Act 2010, you have the right to reasonable adjustments at home to prevent discrimination.

CAN MY LANDLORD REFUSE TO LET ME ADAPT THE PROPERTY?

Private landlords must consider requests for reasonable adaptations and cannot unreasonably refuse changes that support your safety or independence.

WHAT IF MY HOUSING NO LONGER SUITS MY MOBILITY NEEDS?

You can ask for a housing needs assessment. Your local authority may offer a move, adaptations, or help finding accessible social housing.



MOVING OR DOWNSIZING

SHOULD I MOVE TO A BUNGALOW OR GROUND-FLOOR FLAT?

If stairs are a concern, moving to a step-free home can increase your safety and independence — especially if you live alone.

HOW DO I FIND ACCESSIBLE HOUSING IN MY AREA?

Search through your local council's housing register, estate agents, or portals like Homefinder UK. Some charities also maintain lists of accessible properties.

ARE THERE SUPPORTED LIVING SCHEMES FOR AMPUTEES OR DISABLED ADULTS?

Yes, though these vary by area. Ask your local council about supported housing schemes, extra-care facilities, or independent living units designed for disabled adults.

EMOTIONAL & PRACTICAL CONCERNS

HOW DO I MAKE MY HOME FEEL SAFE AGAIN?

Start with small steps: declutter, improve lighting, install grab rails, and rearrange furniture for easier movement. Ask for a visit from an OT or peer support group to get practical ideas.

I'M WORRIED I'LL LOSE MY INDEPENDENCE — WHO CAN HELP?

You're not alone. Many amputees feel this way. Reach out to:

- Your local amputee support group
- Peer mentors
- Social prescribers via your GP

They can help you stay in control of decisions and regain confidence.

WHAT IF I DON'T FEEL CONFIDENT USING STAIRS OR THE BATHROOM?

This is common. Ask your GP or OT for an assessment — they can recommend physical aids or training sessions with a physiotherapist or rehab team to rebuild confidence and ability.



DRIVING

1. CAN I STILL DRIVE AFTER AN AMPUTATION?

Yes, many amputees can continue to drive safely. Your ability to drive depends on the type of amputation and whether any adaptations are needed. You will need to inform the DVLA and may need to undergo a driving assessment.

2. DO I NEED TO TELL THE DVLA THAT I'VE HAD AN AMPUTATION?

Yes. It's a legal requirement to inform the DVLA if you've had a limb amputated. They will assess your medical fitness to drive and may update the conditions on your driving licence. If you do not declare your amputation, you could be fined £1000.

3. HOW DO I GET ASSESSED FOR DRIVING AFTER AN AMPUTATION?

You can contact your local Driving Mobility centre for a driving assessment. They'll assess your needs and recommend any vehicle adaptations. These assessments are carried out by qualified professionals and are designed to get you back on the road, they are not aiming to stop you from driving.

4. WHAT CAR ADAPTATIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR AMPUTEES?

There are many options depending on your needs, including:

- Hand controls for acceleration and braking
- Left-foot accelerators
- Steering aids or remote controls
- Automatic transmission

The right adaptations are based on your physical ability, comfort and any other health conditions. Your assessment will guide this.

5. WHAT IS THE MOTABILITY SCHEME AND AM I ELIGIBLE?

The Motability Scheme allows you to lease a car, scooter, or powered wheelchair using your mobility benefit. You may be eligible if you receive one of the following:

- Enhanced rate of the mobility component of PIP
- Higher rate mobility component of DLA
- Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP)

More info: www.motability.co.uk

6. CAN I STILL DRIVE A MANUAL CAR, OR DO I NEED AN AUTOMATIC?

This depends on your mobility and the type of amputation. Many amputees find automatic cars easier to manage. A driving lesson or assessment will help you decide which is best.

7. DO I NEED TO TAKE ANOTHER DRIVING TEST?

No, you will not have to take a Pass/Fail driving test. However, you may need a practical assessment to make sure you're safe to drive with or without adaptations.

8. SHOULD I TAKE A DRIVING LESSON IN AN ADAPTED VEHICLE?

Yes — it's highly advisable, especially if you're driving with new adaptations or for the first time since your amputation. Specialist instructors can help you build confidence and ensure you're safe on the road and support you through a practical assessment if necessary.

Look for instructors or centres with experience teaching disabled drivers many of which are listed here www.disabilitydrivinginstructors.com or ask your local Driving Mobility Centre for their recommendations.

9. WHAT FINANCIAL HELP IS AVAILABLE FOR BUYING OR ADAPTING A CAR?

Motability Grants: Help with car adaptations or advance payments.

Access to Work: May cover transport costs if you're working or starting a job.

Charities and Trusts: Steel Bones can help signpost you to other support.

Contact us at Steel bones for guidance.

10. CAN I BUY A CAR WITHOUT PAYING VAT?

Yes, if you're disabled and the vehicle is for your personal use, you may be eligible to buy or lease a car without paying VAT. Most lower limb amputees fall under the category of wheelchair users.

You must meet certain criteria, such as:

- The car is permanently and substantially adapted for your use
- It is used primarily for personal and domestic purposes

More info and forms: HMRC VAT Relief Guidance

11. CAN I GET REDUCED VEHICLE EXCISE DUTY (ROAD TAX) AS AN AMPUTEE?

You may be eligible for reduced or free Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) if you receive certain disability benefits, such as the higher/enhanced rate mobility component of DLA, PIP, CDP, or ADP. Being an amputee alone doesn't automatically qualify you — it depends on the benefits you receive.

If you're eligible, you can apply for:

- Free VED — if you're using a vehicle for your personal use and receiving qualifying benefits.
- 50% reduction — if you receive the standard rate mobility component of PIP.

You must apply through the DVLA and provide evidence of your benefit entitlement. Check eligibility and apply on GOV.UK

12. CAN I GET A BLUE BADGE FOR PARKING?

Yes, many amputees are eligible for a Blue Badge, which allows you to park closer to your destination. You can apply through your local council or online.



APPLY FOR A BLUE BADGE

Eligibility may include:

- Receiving higher/enhanced rate mobility benefits
- Difficulty walking distances
- Severe disability affecting mobility

You may need to provide evidence or attend an assessment.

13. HOW DO I INSURE A CAR WITH ADAPTATIONS?

Most insurance providers will cover adapted vehicles, but it's important to declare any adaptations fitted to your car (do not call them modifications) and medical conditions such as your amputation.

14. LEARNER DRIVERS WITH AN AMPUTATION: CAN I LEARN TO DRIVE IF I HAVE AN AMPUTATION?

Yes. Many learner drivers with an amputation successfully pass their test using the appropriate adaptations. The learning process is very similar to that of a non-disabled driver.

15. DO I NEED AN ASSESSMENT BEFORE APPLYING FOR A LICENCE?

Yes. It's strongly recommended to have an adaptations assessment at a Driving Mobility Centre before applying. This identifies the best vehicle adaptations for you and can help speed up the application process.

16. DO I NEED TO TELL THE DVLA ABOUT MY AMPUTATION?

Yes. When applying for your provisional licence, you must declare your amputation. The DVLA may add a code (e.g., 114 – adaptations required) to your licence. If they request more information, send them a copy of your Driving Mobility assessment.

17. WHAT IF MY AMPUTATION HAPPENS AFTER I'VE STARTED LEARNING?

You must inform the DVLA as soon as possible, just like a full licence holder would.

18. HOW DO I FIND A SUITABLE DRIVING INSTRUCTOR?

Start looking early. Many instructors who specialise in disability driving have long waiting lists. You may need to travel, as specialist coverage isn't available in all areas.

19. CAN I LEARN TO DRIVE AT 16?

Yes—if you receive the higher/enhanced rate mobility component of DLA, PIP, CDP, or ADP (in Scotland), you can start learning at age 16. Details can be found [here](#).

20. CAN I PRACTICE WITH A SUPERVISING DRIVER?

Yes. If you're practising with a supervising driver, it's a good idea for them to attend one of your lessons (once you're ready). This helps them understand how you're using the adapted controls.

21. DO I NEED TO TELL THE EXAMINER ABOUT MY ADAPTATIONS WHEN BOOKING THE DRIVING TEST?

Yes. When booking your practical test, declare your disability. This gives the examiner time to understand your vehicle's controls and complete any required paperwork.

22. WHAT DOCUMENTS DO I NEED TO KEEP UP TO DATE?

- Your driving licence (with updated medical info if needed)
- MOT and insurance
- Blue Badge (if applicable)

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Always notify your insurer and DVLA about changes in medical status or vehicle modifications.
- Adapted driving lessons can boost your confidence.
- Join a support group: Talking to others who've adapted to driving can be really helpful.

FINANCIAL & PRACTICAL

1 DO I HAVE TO PAY FOR PROSTHETICS?

NHS Prosthetics (UK):

No — prosthetic limbs are free of charge on the NHS for anyone who needs one. After your amputation, you should be referred to a Limb Fitting Centre, where a specialist team will assess your needs.

Private or Specialist Prosthetics:

If you prefer a higher-spec prosthetic (e.g., sports limb, bionic hand, or lightweight model), you can purchase one privately. These are not usually funded by the NHS — however: If your amputation resulted from a personal injury, medical negligence, or accident, you may be able to fund advanced prosthetics through a legal claim or insurance settlement.



2. HOW DO I GET A BLUE BADGE / DISABILITY PARKING PERMIT?

In England, Wales, and Scotland, the Blue Badge Scheme helps people with mobility issues access disabled parking spaces.

You may be eligible automatically if you:

- Receive PIP with 8+ points in the “moving around” category
- Receive Higher Rate Mobility DLA
- Are registered as blind
- Receive War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement

You can also apply based on walking difficulties, even if you don't meet automatic criteria. Many amputees are accepted under this.

Apply online: www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge

Your local council processes the application — they may ask for medical evidence and/or invite you for an assessment.

3. WHAT STATE BENEFITS CAN I CLAIM AS AN AMPUTEE?

You may be eligible for one or more of the following UK benefits:

- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) – for adults aged 16–64 with long-term health conditions
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) – for children under 16
- Attendance Allowance – for people over State Pension age who need help with daily tasks
- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) – if you're unable to work
- Universal Credit – for general living costs (can include additional disability support)
- Disabled Facilities Grant – to adapt your home

Additional support may be available for housing, travel, and equipment depending on your circumstances.

4. HOW DO I APPLY FOR BENEFITS?

1. Check eligibility: Use benefits calculators like:

- www.turn2us.org.uk
- www.entitledto.co.uk

2. Apply online or by phone:

Visit www.gov.uk or call the relevant helpline. For example: PIP: 0800 917 2222

Universal Credit: Apply via your Universal Credit account

3. Get support with your claim:

Steel Bones and other organisations like Citizens Advice and Scope can help you:

- Understand what to claim
- Gather supporting documents (medical reports, care plans)
- Complete application forms or appeal decisions

PARENTS OF AMPUTEES

GUIDANCE, HOPE, AND CONNECTION FOR FAMILIES SUPPORTING A CHILD THROUGH LIMB LOSS.

1. HOW DO I HELP MY CHILD COPE EMOTIONALLY WITH LIMB LOSS? WILL THEY EVER FEEL 'NORMAL' AGAIN?

Yes – though it may take time. Children are incredibly resilient. With the right support and environment, they can thrive, develop confidence, and fully participate in life, just like their peers.

2. HOW DO I SUPPORT THEIR CONFIDENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH?

- Let them talk (or not) at their own pace
- Reinforce their identity beyond limb loss
- Connect them with peer mentors or amputee kids
- Ask your GP AND PROSTHETIST about child psychologists or support workers

3. SHOULD I ENCOURAGE THEM TO TALK ABOUT IT, OR WAIT FOR THEM TO OPEN UP?

Gently offer the space to talk, without pressure. Some children open up through drawing, play, or storytelling. Keep asking open-ended questions and validate their feelings.

4. WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT DURING THEIR RECOVERY? AND HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR THEM TO HEAL PHYSICALLY?

It varies, but children generally heal faster than adults. Soft tissue healing might take 4–8 weeks, but rehabilitation is ongoing as they learn new ways to move and do daily tasks.

5. WILL THEY BE IN PAIN? WHAT ABOUT PHANTOM LIMB PAIN?

Yes, pain is common – including phantom limb pain. Children may describe tingling, burning, or odd sensations. Speak to the medical team about pain management options (including medications and distraction therapies).

6. WILL THE HOSPITAL SUPPORT US EMOTIONALLY AS A FAMILY?

Yes – ask for the hospital's psychological support service. Many paediatric rehab teams include a family support worker or counsellor.



7. WHEN WILL MY CHILD GET A PROSTHETIC? AND HOW OFTEN DO KIDS NEED NEW PROSTHETICS AS THEY GROW?

Children usually get new limbs every 6-12 months depending on their age and growth rate. Frequent check-ins with the prosthetics team are important.

8. ARE THERE SPECIAL PROSTHETICS FOR SPORTS OR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES?

Yes! There are sports limbs, waterproof limbs, and lighter models designed for play. Ask your limb centre or prosthetist about options and referrals to specialist services.

9. WILL THEY BE ABLE TO PLAY, SWIM, OR RUN?

Absolutely. Many children return to sports, swimming, dancing – even trampolining! Adaptations or specialised equipment may be needed, but activity is encouraged.

10. HOW DO WE PREPARE THEM TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL? AND WHAT DO WE TELL TEACHERS AND CLASSMATES?

Be open but age-appropriate. You can:

- Arrange a meeting with school staff before their return
- Share a short story or video to explain to classmates
- Ask the school to do a disability awareness session

11. HOW CAN THE SCHOOL SUPPORT THEM (ACCESSIBILITY, AWARENESS)?

Schools should offer:

- Accessible toilets & entrances
- Flexibility in PE and playtime
- Emotional support and inclusion planning

Your SENDCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) is key.

12. SHOULD WE WORRY ABOUT BULLYING OR FEELING LEFT OUT?

Sadly, bullying can happen – but with early education, inclusive language, and supportive staff, most children feel accepted. Encourage open dialogue with your child and the school.

13. ARE THERE SUPPORT GROUPS FOR PARENTS OF AMPUTEES? AND IS THERE SOMEONE I CAN TALK TO WHO'S BEEN THROUGH THIS?

Yes – many organisations offer parent-to-parent support. Steel Bones, Reach, and LimbPower all offer family-friendly communities.

14. ARE THERE ANY FAMILY-FRIENDLY AMPUTEE MEETUPS, CAMPS, OR CHARITIES?

Yes! Look out for:

- Steel Bones Celebration Day and local activities
- LimbPower Games (kids & families)
- Reach Family Weekend (for children with upper limb differences)

15. WHAT FINANCIAL HELP IS AVAILABLE FOR CHILDREN'S PROSTHETICS AND EQUIPMENT? ARE PROSTHETICS FULLY COVERED ON THE NHS (UK)?

Yes – the NHS provides basic limbs, sports or specialist limbs are funded by NHS England's Child Prosthetics Fund which can help for certain needs.

16. CAN WE GET GRANTS FOR SPORTS LIMBS OR EXTRA HELP AT HOME?

Yes – charities like:

- The Boparan Charitable Trust
- Elifar Foundation
- The ACT Foundation

These offer funding for equipment, adaptations, and assistive tech.

17. WHAT ABOUT TRAVEL COSTS FOR HOSPITAL VISITS?

You may qualify for NHS Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme or support via local councils or charities. Keep all receipts and ask your hospital about options.

OTHER COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

18. WILL MY CHILD BE INDEPENDENT WHEN THEY GROW UP?

Yes – with the right support, many amputees drive, work, parent, travel, and live fully independent lives. Focus on building skills, resilience, and confidence early.

19. WILL THEY BE ABLE TO DRIVE, WORK, OR HAVE RELATIONSHIPS?

Yes. They might need adaptations, but limb difference doesn't limit ambition or love. There are amputee athletes, surgeons, actors, teachers, parents, and more.

20. HOW DO I MAKE SURE I'M NOT OVERPROTECTIVE?

It's a balance. Keep safety in mind, but encourage independence – let them try, fail, and try again. Involve them in decisions about their care and give them ownership of their story.



SCHOOL & EDUCATION

1. WILL MY SCHOOL BE ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE MY MOBILITY NEEDS (E.G., RAMPS, ELEVATORS, ACCESSIBLE TOILETS)?

Yes—schools have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments so that all students, including amputees, can access education. This may include installing ramps, providing access to lifts, allocating classrooms on the ground floor, or making sure accessible toilets are available. If your school is not already adapted, they should work with you and your family to make changes that support your independence and dignity.

If you feel you need a bit more time to get between classes, speak to the adults in school. This may be a reasonable adjustment they can make for you.

2. WILL I BE ALLOWED TO TAKE PART IN PE OR SPORTS?

Absolutely. PE should be inclusive, and teachers are encouraged to adapt activities so everyone can join in safely and confidently. Some students may also take part in adapted sports like wheelchair basketball, seated volleyball, or swimming. If something isn't right for you, that's okay—schools should offer alternatives and never exclude you from physical activity without discussing options first.

3. WILL I HAVE A TEACHING ASSISTANT OR SOMEONE TO HELP ME WITH DAILY TASKS?

If you need support—whether it's with mobility, using a prosthetic, or managing fatigue—the school can apply for additional help through an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a similar support plan. This might include a teaching assistant, access arrangements, or medical support. Every case is different, and a conversation with the school's SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) is a good place to start.

4. WHAT IF OTHER STUDENTS STARE OR ASK QUESTIONS—HOW SHOULD I RESPOND?

It's completely normal for others to be curious, especially if they've never met someone with a limb difference before. How you respond is entirely up to you—some people choose to educate; others prefer to keep it brief. Your teachers can help by setting respectful expectations in the classroom, and you can even lead an awareness session (with support) if you're comfortable.

Remember: your story is your own, and you choose how much to share. If you find people are upsetting you when they're asking questions, please speak to a trusted adult about it. It may be that some children don't know how best to ask things and don't mean to upset you, others may go too far and become unkind. That is unacceptable and must be addressed quickly and

efficiently. Don't keep it to yourself if this happens, talk to your trusted adult as soon as possible about it.

5. WHAT CAN I DO IF I FEEL ISOLATED OR DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS?

Feeling different is okay—and reaching out is a strength. Talk to a trusted teacher, support staff, or family member if you're struggling. Many schools have a pastoral team, student mentors, or counsellors who can help. You can also connect with charities like Steel Bones, who run support groups and youth activities where you can meet others with similar experiences. You're not alone—and your difference is part of what makes you powerful.

6. WHAT HAPPENS DURING FIRE DRILLS OR EMERGENCIES—HOW WILL I SAFELY EVACUATE?

Your school will have a fire safety plan in place to make sure everyone gets out safely in the event of a fire. Some people in the school may require extra support to evacuate if required, they will have a risk assessment written to make sure everything is in place if something were to happen. Talk to the leadership team or the SENCO in your school to make sure you have a risk assessment written and everything is in place for you.

7. CAN I WEAR OR TAKE OFF MY PROSTHETIC DURING THE SCHOOL DAY?

Absolutely! You must do whatever works best for you to feel most comfortable at school. If you think you will need to take your prosthetic off during the day talk to your school about having a safe space to keep it, for example a school locker or a teacher's office. You could also use this safe space for any additional aids you need, such as a walking stick, crutches or a wheelchair.

8. CAN I WEAR DIFFERENT SHOES OR CLOTHING TO HELP WITH MY PROSTHETIC?

That is something to discuss with the school, but they are able to make reasonable adjustments to their policies for you, so you feel safe and comfortable during the school day.

9. WHAT IF I NEED TO CHARGE OR MAINTAIN AN ELECTRONIC LIMB?

Again, this is something to speak to your school about, but they have a duty of care which means they need to provide a safe space for you to maintain your prosthetic in whatever way you need to.

10. HOW CAN TEACHERS AND CLASSMATES BE EDUCATED ABOUT MY CONDITION?

You can talk to them yourself about your story and give practical tips specialised to you if you feel comfortable doing that. You could have family members or close friends who already know about being an amputee with you for support. Steel Bones also offers school workshops and assemblies if you'd like us to come in and do a talk on your behalf.



11. WILL THE SCHOOL UNDERSTAND HOW TO SUPPORT ME IF MY PROSTHETIC CAUSES PAIN OR DISCOMFORT?

They may not to begin with, and that's ok. Keeping communication between you and the school is key. It's important for them to know how you're feeling physically and mentally so they can support you through school so keep talking to your trusted adults in school, even on good days, let them know what's happening!

12. CAN I TALK TO SOMEONE AT SCHOOL IF I FEEL ANXIOUS OR UPSET?

Absolutely! There will be designated staff you can talk to at school, or you could ask to speak to a trusted adult outside of the Pastoral Care team. Please keep talking and expressing how you are feeling, on good and bad days! It's the best way to let everyone know the kind of support you need. If you do find it difficult to open up face to face, perhaps ask if there is an email address you can use to talk to staff, or have a notebook with your trusted adult to write messages to each other.

RETURNING TO WORK

1. WHEN CAN I RETURN TO WORK AFTER AN AMPUTATION?

It depends on your recovery, the type of work you do, and medical advice. Some people return within a few months, others take longer. Always discuss with your GP, prosthetist, and occupational health team before deciding.

2. WHAT RIGHTS DO I HAVE AT WORK?

In the UK, the Equality Act 2010 protects you from discrimination due to disability. Your employer must consider "reasonable adjustments" to help you work safely and effectively.

3. WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS?

Adjustments will depend on your role, but common examples include:

- Flexible hours or phased return to work
- Extra breaks to manage fatigue or pain
- Adapted workstation (e.g. chair, desk, computer setup)
- Modified duties (avoiding heavy lifting, long standing/walking)
- Accessible parking or entry routes
- Specialist equipment (prosthetic-friendly footwear, adapted tools, voice-activated software)

4. WHO DECIDES WHAT ADJUSTMENTS I NEED?

- You know best what challenges you face day-to-day
- Your employer has a duty to discuss options openly
- Occupational health or HR may carry out a workplace assessment
- Your clinical team (prosthetist, physiotherapist, GP) can provide medical notes or recommendations.

5. DO I HAVE TO TELL MY EMPLOYER EVERYTHING ABOUT MY AMPUTATION?

No. You only need to share information relevant to your ability to work and the adjustments you may need. You are not obliged to disclose medical details unless you wish to.

6. CAN I GET OUTSIDE SUPPORT WITH WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENTS?

Yes. The government's Access to Work scheme can help with funding for equipment, support workers, or travel. Charities and job centres may also provide advice and advocacy.

7. WHAT IF MY EMPLOYER REFUSES TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS?

Ask for a written explanation. You can seek advice from your union (if you have one), ACAS, or disability employment advisors. You have legal protection under the Equality Act.

8. HOW CAN I PREPARE MYSELF TO RETURN TO WORK?

- Speak openly with your healthcare team about readiness
- Plan a phased return if possible (e.g. part-time hours at first)
- Practise daily routines (travel, dressing, prosthesis use)
- Stay active to build stamina and strength
- Reach out for peer support from other amputees in work

9. CAN I CHANGE CAREER IF MY OLD ROLE ISN'T SUITABLE ANYMORE?

Absolutely. Many amputees retrain or move into different roles that fit their skills and physical needs. Job centres, careers advisors, and charities can support with training and CV advice. Steel Bone has a fantastic volunteer who can help with careers counselling.

10. WHERE CAN I GET MORE HELP?

- Access to Work (gov.uk) – practical and financial support
- ACAS (acas.org.uk) – workplace rights and disputes guidance
- Jobcentre Plus disability employment advisors
- Charities like Steel Bones, LimbPower – peer support and advocacy

Reminder: Every workplace and every amputee is different. Work with your employer, occupational health, and healthcare team to find what works best for you.



TRAVEL & HOLIDAYS

1. CAN I TRAVEL AFTER AN AMPUTATION?

Yes. Many amputees travel regularly. Once your doctor confirms you're fit to travel, you can plan trips just as before — with some extra preparation around mobility, equipment, and medication.

2. WHAT DO I NEED TO TELL THE AIRLINE OR TRAVEL PROVIDER?

Inform the airline in advance if you need assistance at the airport (wheelchair support, boarding help).

If you're carrying a prosthesis, mobility aid, or medical equipment, let them know. Some airlines allow you to carry medical equipment free of charge — ask when booking.

3. DO PROSTHETICS CAUSE PROBLEMS AT AIRPORT SECURITY?

Prosthetic limbs and mobility aids may set off alarms. You may be asked to go through a body scanner or have a manual check.

You can request a private search if you prefer.

Carry a doctor's letter explaining your amputation and prosthesis — it can make security smoother.

4. CAN I TAKE MY WHEELCHAIR ON THE PLANE?

Yes. Airlines will usually take manual wheelchairs into the cabin or store them in the hold. Power wheelchairs may need special handling due to batteries. Always check requirements with your airline.

5. WHAT SHOULD I PACK IN MY HAND LUGGAGE?

- Spare prosthetic liners, socks, or sleeves
- Medication (in original packaging, with prescriptions)
- Wipes and skincare for your residual limb
- A small cushion for comfort
- A copy of your medical letters

6. HOW DO I MANAGE LONGER JOURNEYS?

- Move around the cabin or stretch regularly to prevent stiffness and swelling
- If using a wheelchair, plan rest stops on road journeys
- Keep snacks and water handy to avoid fatigue

TRAVEL INSURANCE ELIGIBILITY & COVERAGE

7. WILL TRAVEL INSURANCE COVER ME AS AN AMPUTEE?

Yes. Most insurers will cover amputees, but you must declare your amputation as a medical condition. Not declaring it can invalidate your policy.

8. DO I NEED TO DECLARE MY AMPUTATION AS A PRE-EXISTING CONDITION?

Yes. Even if you are otherwise fit and well, your amputation must be listed when applying for cover.

9. WILL INSURERS REFUSE ME COVER BECAUSE OF MY AMPUTATION?

No, but some standard insurers may increase the premium or exclude certain claims. Specialist providers are usually more flexible.

10. WHAT IF I HAVE OTHER MEDICAL CONDITIONS AS WELL AS MY AMPUTATION?

These must also be declared (e.g. diabetes, vascular disease). Premiums may be higher, but you'll be properly protected.

MEDICAL CARE ABROAD

11. DOES THE POLICY COVER MEDICAL TREATMENT RELATED TO MY AMPUTATION (E.G. SKIN BREAKDOWN, INFECTION, FALLS)?

Yes, if you declare your amputation. Without declaration, any related claim may be refused.

12. WILL IT COVER THE COST OF REPLACING PROSTHETIC EQUIPMENT IF IT'S DAMAGED OR LOST ABROAD?

Standard baggage cover is usually too low to replace a prosthesis. You may need specialist insurance that specifically covers prosthetics.

13. IF I NEED URGENT TREATMENT OVERSEAS, WILL INSURANCE COVER TRANSPORT BACK TO THE UK?

Yes, most comprehensive policies include emergency medical evacuation if you are too unwell to travel home normally.

PROSTHETICS & EQUIPMENT

14. ARE PROSTHETICS INCLUDED UNDER BAGGAGE/PERSONAL BELONGINGS COVER?

Sometimes — but often the limit (£1,500-£3,000) is far below the value of a prosthesis. Always check and consider specialist cover.

15. IS THERE A MAXIMUM CLAIM AMOUNT FOR PROSTHETICS?

Yes. Most policies cap claims. Ask your insurer if you can extend cover or add prosthetics as a specified item.

16. CAN I GET COVER FOR HIRING OR REPLACING MOBILITY AIDS ABROAD IF MINE BREAK?

Some insurers offer "mobility equipment cover" as an add-on. Always ask before you buy.



COSTS & PREMIUMS

17. WILL TRAVEL INSURANCE BE MORE EXPENSIVE FOR AMPUTEES?

It can be, especially if you have related health conditions. Shopping around helps.

18. ARE THERE SPECIALIST INSURERS WHO OFFER BETTER RATES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

Yes. Organisations like Fish Insurance, AllClear, and specialist disability travel insurers often provide fairer cover.

19. DOES DECLARING MY CONDITION MEAN MY PREMIUMS GO UP A LOT?

It depends on your overall health. If your amputation is stable and you have no major complications, the increase may be small.

PRACTICALITIES

20. DO I NEED A DOCTOR'S LETTER TO GET COVER?

Not usually, unless you've had recent surgery or treatment. Some insurers may ask for confirmation that you're "fit to travel."

21. WILL I NEED TO PROVIDE MEDICAL HISTORY OR PROOF OF PROSTHETIC USE?

Usually not, but insurers will ask questions about your health and mobility. Answer honestly.

22. WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T DECLARE MY AMPUTATION AND THEN NEED TREATMENT ABROAD?

Your claim may be rejected, leaving you with a very large bill. Always declare it.

23. CAN I STILL GET ANNUAL MULTI-TRIP COVER, OR DO I NEED SINGLE-TRIP INSURANCE?

Yes, you can still get annual cover if your condition is stable. If you're awaiting surgery or have recent complications, you may need single-trip cover.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

24. WILL I BE COVERED IF I TAKE PART IN SPORT OR ACTIVITY HOLIDAYS (SKIING, DIVING, CYCLING)?

Many policies exclude higher-risk sports unless you add them on. Check if your prosthesis is suitable and safe for the activity.

25. WHAT HAPPENS IF I'M ALREADY ABROAD AND HAVE AN ISSUE WITH MY PROSTHESIS?

Contact your insurer's 24-hour emergency helpline. They may arrange repairs, replacement, or mobility equipment hire.

26. CAN I GET INSURANCE IF I'M WAITING FOR SURGERY OR REHAB?

Yes, but insurers may exclude claims related to your current condition. Always disclose if you're awaiting treatment.

27. TOP TIPS FOR AMPUTEES BUYING TRAVEL INSURANCE

- Always declare your amputation and any other conditions
- Ask specifically about prosthetics and mobility aids cover
- Carry a doctor's letter about your amputation and prosthetic needs
- Compare specialist insurers — they often understand amputees better
- Keep emergency numbers and your policy details handy when travelling

28. ARE HOTELS AND HOLIDAY HOMES ACCESSIBLE?

Not all are. Ask before booking, do they have:

- Step-free access to entrances and bathrooms
- Grab rails, wet rooms, or adapted showers
- Bed height suitable for transfers
- Accessible transport nearby

29. CAN I SWIM OR DO SPORTS WHILE ABROAD?

Yes — but check with your prosthetist about water-safe or sport-specific prosthetics. Some amputees prefer to leave prostheses behind for swimming and use crutches or water aids instead.

30. WHERE CAN I FIND SUPPORT WHEN TRAVELLING?

- Local amputee or disability forums for advice on accessible destinations
- Charities like LimbPower for sport & leisure support
- Travel companies that specialise in accessible holidays

TRAVEL CHECKLIST FOR AMPUTEES

- ☐ Medical letters & prescriptions
- ☐ Contact details for your limb centre
- ☐ Spare liners, socks, and skin-care items
- ☐ Mobility aids or spares (crutches tips, wheelchair parts)
- ☐ Accessible accommodation confirmed
- ☐ Travel insurance covering medical and equipment

YOU ARE
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03333 606 930
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RELATIONSHIPS & INTIMACY

1. WILL AMPUTATION AFFECT MY RELATIONSHIPS?

It can, but not always in the way you might expect. Some people find their relationships grow stronger through shared challenges, while others may need time to adjust. Communication is key — talk openly with your partner, family, or friends about your needs and feelings.

2. HOW DO I TALK TO A PARTNER ABOUT MY AMPUTATION?

Be honest about your feelings, limitations, and hopes. Share your recovery journey and let them ask questions.

Reassure them that it's okay if they feel unsure — you can learn and adapt together.

3. WHAT ABOUT INTIMACY AND SEX AFTER AMPUTATION?

Intimacy is still very possible. You may need to explore different positions, aids, or pacing. Some people worry about body image or confidence — take things slowly, and focus on closeness, not just sex.

If you're struggling, a counsellor, sex therapist, or physiotherapist can give guidance.

4. WILL I STILL BE ATTRACTIVE TO OTHERS?

Yes. Attraction is about much more than appearance. Many amputees report their partners value their resilience, confidence, and personality even more. Building your own self-confidence helps — try focusing on what your body can do, rather than what has changed.

5. CAN I DATE AFTER AMPUTATION?

Definitely. Some people choose to share their amputation openly on dating profiles, while others wait until they feel comfortable. There's no right or wrong way. The right person will respect and accept you as you are.

6. HOW DO I MANAGE PHYSICAL CHALLENGES DURING INTIMACY?

Experiment with positions that are comfortable for you. Use pillows, cushions, or adaptive supports for stability.

If you use a prosthetic, you can decide whether to keep it on or remove it — do what feels right for you.

7. WHAT IF I FEEL ANXIOUS OR AVOID INTIMACY?

That's completely normal, especially after surgery or trauma. Give yourself time, and don't pressure yourself. Talking to a trusted partner, support group, or counsellor can help. Professional sex therapists are trained to support amputees.

8. ARE THERE SUPPORT GROUPS FOR THIS TOPIC?

Yes. Peer support through amputee networks, online forums, and charities can provide real-life experiences and reassurance. Some organisations also run workshops or counselling sessions specifically on relationships and intimacy.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Communication and patience are essential
- Intimacy is about connection, not perfection
- There's no single "right" way — adapt and discover what works for you
- Professional support is available if needed

PREGNANCY

1. CAN I HAVE A HEALTHY PREGNANCY AFTER AN AMPUTATION?

Yes. Most amputees can have a healthy pregnancy. Your care team may include an obstetrician, midwife, and your prosthetic/rehabilitation specialists to ensure your mobility, pain, and overall health are supported.

2. WILL PREGNANCY AFFECT MY RESIDUAL LIMB OR PROSTHETIC USE?

Weight gain, swelling, and posture changes may affect socket fit. You may need socket adjustments, temporary liners, or mobility aids as your body changes.

Some people prefer to use wheelchairs more often later in pregnancy for comfort and safety.

3. ARE THERE RISKS I SHOULD BE AWARE OF?

Balance changes can increase the risk of falls — extra care may be needed. Back pain and phantom pain can sometimes worsen with pregnancy. If you have vascular conditions, diabetes, or other health factors related to your amputation, your care team will monitor you closely.

4. CAN I GIVE BIRTH VAGINALLY, OR WILL I NEED A C-SECTION?

Both are possible. Amputation itself doesn't usually prevent vaginal birth, but



your healthcare team will consider:

- Your mobility and ability to change positions during labour
- Any underlying health conditions
- Your personal birth preferences
- Your midwife and obstetrician will make an individualised plan with you

5. HOW CAN I PREPARE FOR LABOUR AND DELIVERY?

Discuss pain relief options with your team in advance.

Practise positions for labour that feel safe and stable with your prosthesis or wheelchair. Arrange accessible equipment (grab rails, adjustable bed, birthing aids) if needed.

6. HOW DO I CARE FOR MY BABY AFTER BIRTH AS AN AMPUTEE?

Adaptive baby equipment (slings, wheelchair-friendly prams, hands-free carriers) can help. Ask an occupational therapist about safe ways to lift, carry, and feed your baby.

Don't be afraid to ask family, friends, or peer groups for support in the early months.

7. WILL BREASTFEEDING OR CHEST-FEEDING BE AFFECTED?

No, amputation itself doesn't affect milk production. Positioning and comfort are the main considerations — cushions, adaptive chairs, or feeding pillows may help.

8. WHAT ABOUT EMOTIONAL WELLBEING DURING PREGNANCY AND AFTER BIRTH?

It's normal to feel anxious about the physical and emotional challenges. Many amputee parents say they worried about coping, but found strategies that worked for them. Midwives, counsellors, and peer support groups can offer reassurance and practical advice.

9. WHERE CAN I FIND SUPPORT FROM OTHER PARENTS WHO ARE AMPUTEES?

Charities like Steel Bones, Limbless Association, and LimbPower Families often connect parents.

Online forums and local amputee groups can share real-life tips.

Midwives can refer you to perinatal mental health support if needed.

KEY TIPS FOR AMPUTEES DURING PREGNANCY

- Stay in close contact with both your maternity and prosthetic teams
- Plan for possible mobility changes as pregnancy progresses
- Explore adaptive baby care equipment early
- Build a support network for after birth
- Remember: pregnancy and parenthood may look different, but they are very possible and fulfilling

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

1. WHAT IF MY PROSTHETIC LIMB BREAKS OR STOPS WORKING SUDDENLY?

Stop using it immediately to avoid falls or injury.

Use your backup mobility aid (crutches, wheelchair, walker) if available.

Contact your limb centre/prosthetist as soon as possible.

If you're travelling, call ahead to the nearest limb centre or ask your insurer about emergency repairs.

2. WHAT IF MY RESIDUAL LIMB BECOMES RED, SWOLLEN, OR BLISTERED?

- Remove the prosthesis to prevent further irritation
- Clean and dry the area gently
- If it's minor, rest and monitor for 24-48 hours
- If redness worsens, the wound breaks, or swelling spreads contact your GP or limb centre

For signs of infection (heat, pus, fever), seek urgent medical care

3. WHAT IF I FALL AND INJURE MY RESIDUAL LIMB?

- Check for bleeding, swelling, or deformity
- If there is heavy bleeding: Apply pressure with a clean cloth or bandage
- Call 999 (UK) or your local emergency number
- If it's painful but not severe, avoid weight-bearing and contact your healthcare provider

4. WHAT IF MY WHEELCHAIR, CRUTCHES, OR MOBILITY AIDS BREAK?

Always keep a backup aid if possible. Many councils and NHS wheelchair services provide emergency repair numbers — keep these with you.

Some charities (e.g., British Red Cross) offer short-term equipment loans.

5. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I EXPERIENCE SUDDEN SEVERE PAIN IN MY RESIDUAL LIMB?

Phantom pain and nerve pain are common, but sudden new severe pain could signal infection, poor circulation, or another issue. Rest, remove the prosthesis, and check the skin.

Contact your GP or limb centre urgently if pain is unbearable or accompanied by fever, swelling, or colour change: **CALL 999**.

6. WHAT IF MY PROSTHESIS GETS LOST OR STOLEN WHILE TRAVELLING?

Use your backup mobility aid (crutches/wheelchair) then contact your insurer and report the loss immediately.

Ask your limb centre if an emergency replacement or loan prosthesis is available.





EMERGENCY

CONTACT NUMBERS

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IN AN EMERGENCY?

Keep these numbers written down
And also saved in your phone.

LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCIES: 999

NHS Non-emergency medical advice: **111**

Local limb centre / prosthetist:

GP surgery:

Wheelchair/emergency equipment repair service:

Travel insurer (if abroad):

EMERGENCY READINESS CHECKLIST

- Keep a backup mobility aid at home
- Store a basic first aid kit and wound care supplies
- Save key contact numbers in your phone and on a card in your wallet
- Carry a doctor's letter if travelling with prosthetics/equipment
- Know the signs of infection and when to seek urgent help

EMAIL HELLO@STEELBONE.CO.UK

OR CALL US ON

03333 606 930

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FOR ALL AMPUTEES AND THEIR FAMILIES