



# **So Your Patient has had an Amputation?**

**A guide for  
Physiotherapists who do  
not specialise in  
Amputee Rehabilitation**



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## So Your Patient Has Had An Amputation, now what?

The aim of this guide is to provide physiotherapists with a variety of resources to support you in clinical practice in non-amputee rehab specific roles. It will signpost you to the most relevant and useful resources, as well as those more local to you and your patient.

This guide is split into five sections:

- **‘So what?’**
- **Useful contacts**
- **Helpful publications**
- **Amputee Rehab Glossary**
- **More Information**

There are approximately 7500 lower limb amputations a year in the UK. 85% of these are due to Peripheral Arterial Occlusive Disease, and over 50% of these have Diabetes.

Other causes of amputation include:

1. Tumour
2. Trauma
3. Congenital
4. Orthopaedic complications.



# So What?

So you have a patient with an amputation and you don't know where to start? The good news is that there are lots of valuable and accessible resources available to help you. These are explained in detail throughout this guide.

Below is a brief guide to consider when treating an amputee patient.

1. What is the level of amputation?
  2. What was the cause of the amputation?
  3. Are they Diabetic? If so, check this is controlled and ensure they have appropriate foot care for their remaining limb (**follow the [BACPAR foot care guidelines](#)** ).
  4. Do they have a problem with their stump? (**if pain/sores liaise with their [Regional Amputee Rehabilitation Service](#) or with your patient's District Nurse**).
- Do they wear a prosthetic limb and how active are they once wearing it? - Is it a problem with their prosthetic limb? (**if yes, liaise with your patient's local Prosthetist.**)
  - Do they experience Phantom Limb Pain or Sensations? (**check medication and if necessary liaise with local amputee service or patient's GP.**)
  - Do they have access to a wheelchair? (often provided via their local Occupational Therapist or [Wheelchair Centre](#)) Also available to hire from [The Red Cross](#).



If you have been referred an amputee patient for mobility practice and they are not independently donning their prosthesis and you are unfamiliar with their type of limb, contact their Prosthetist / Amputee Service Physiotherapist for guidance on donning the limb correctly. Often these instructions can be given over the phone or an advice sheet can be sent out.

More useful information can be found:

Specialist Counselling—via local Amputation Rehabilitation Consultant

Driving info

- [www.mobility-centres.org.uk](http://www.mobility-centres.org.uk)

Smoking cessation services

- <http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree>

Physical activity schemes/ Disabled Sport

- <http://www.limbpower.com/>
- <http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/Pages/disability-activities.aspx>
- <http://parasport.org.uk/find-a-sport/>
- <http://www.efds.co.uk/>
- <https://www.wheelpower.org.uk/>



# Useful Contacts

## British Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Amputee Rehabilitation (BACPAR)

BACPAR is a professional network of the CSP for Physiotherapists involved within the specialist field of amputee and prosthetic rehabilitation. You can [contact us](#) via the website and also find details of any upcoming [Regional Study days](#) and information about the Annual BACPAR National Conference.

There are up to date contact details for Regional Amputee Rehabilitation Service under the '[Links and Addresses](#)' tab on the website.

Via the CSP website, there is also an iCSP Amputee Rehabilitation network for posting discussions topics. If the above does not satisfy your query, please contact the BACPAR Honorary Public Relations Officer at [bacparpro@gmail.com](mailto:bacparpro@gmail.com) who will direct your queries to the appropriate Executive Committee member.

If you would like to [join BACPAR](#) you can take full advantage of access to our journal, members only area on website and Facebook Group as well as reduced rates to study days and conferences.

Website: <http://bacpar.csp.org.uk>

Twitter: @BACPAR\_official

Facebook: **BACPAR\_official**



# Helpful Publications

## BACPAR Guidelines:

- [Clinical guidelines for the pre and post operative physiotherapy management of adults with lower limb amputation - 2nd edition \(2017\)](#)
- [Guidance for Falls prevention in lower limb amputees \(2011\)](#)
- [Risks to the contra-lateral foot of unilateral lower limb amputees guideline \(2012\)](#)
- [Evidence Based Clinical Guidelines for the Physiotherapy Management of Adults with Lower Limb Protheses \(2012\)](#)
- [Guidance for the Multi-disciplinary team on the management of post-operative residuum oedema in lower limb amputees \(2012\)](#)
- [BACPAR Outcome Measure Toolbox Version 2 \(2014\)](#)
- [Amputee Rehabilitation Guidance for the Education of Pre Registration Physiotherapy Students \(2013\)](#)



## SPARG (Scottish Physiotherapy Amputee Research Group):

- [PPAM Aid Guidelines \(2008\)](#)
- [Exercise Therapy for patients with Intermittent Claudication \(2012\)](#)
- [WestMARK Knee guide \(2017\)](#)

## PIRPAG exercises:

- [Transtibial \(below knee\) amputation,](#)
- [Transfemoral \(above knee\) amputation,](#)
- [Gym Ball exercises for Amputee Rehabilitation](#)

## Other resources:

- [Ortho Europe PPAM aid fitting tutorial](#)
- [Lower limb amputation—working together' NCEPOD report \(2014\)](#)



# Amputee Rehab Glossary

## Level of amputation

<b>Congenital Limb deficiency</b>	Absence of part or all of a limb at the time of birth
<b>Ankle Disarticulation/ Symes amputation</b>	Involves amputation of the foot through the ankle joint
<b>Transtibial</b>	A below the knee amputation
<b>Knee disarticulation</b>	Amputation through the knee joint
<b>Transfemoral</b>	An above knee amputation
<b>Hip disarticulation</b>	Amputation of the leg through the hip joint
<b>Hemipelvectomy</b>	Amputation of the leg that also involves the removal of part of the pelvis with the limb, also called a hindquarter amputation
<b>Transradial</b>	A below the elbow amputation
<b>Transhumeral</b>	An above elbow amputation
<b>Shoulder disarticulation</b>	Amputation at the shoulder joint
<b>Forequarter</b>	An amputation that removes part of shoulder and the arm

Taken from: <http://www.limbless-association.org/index.php/information/amputee/glossary>





## **Amputated limb**

Residual limb – another term for the stump formed following partial amputation of a limb

Stump volume/changes – describes the size of the stump in relation to the socket of the prosthesis to be used. Fluctuation in the size and shape of the stump, related to body fluid levels and caused by changes in the weather, health etc. Makes a consistent fit of the prosthesis difficult

## **Prosthetic limb**

Prosthesis – An artificial limb worn following amputation of a body part

Prosthetist – A professional specialising in the design, manufacture and fitting of artificial limbs

Donning/doffing – The act of putting a prosthesis on and off.

Shrinker – A compression sock specifically for stumps, used to control swelling following amputation surgery

Cosmesis – A cosmetic cover over the mechanical elements of a prosthesis

Stump sock – A liner made specifically for stumps, worn with the prosthesis

Liner – A removable sock-like product that fits over the stump/residual limb and acts as a cushion and interface with the socket of the prosthesis. Formed from gel, silicone, foam or plastic.

**Suspension** How the prosthesis is held on (commonly a knee sleeve/cuff strap/ pin lock/ belt/ shoulder strap).

Patella Tendon Bearing (PTB) – a type of below knee prosthesis in which much of the weight is taken on the patella-tendon. Usually uses a sleeve or cuff strap for suspension.

Supracondylar prosthesis – Similar to PTB but comes in around the femoral condyles to hold it on

Sleeve suspension - A sleeve that is rolled over a below the knee prosthesis and onto the thigh.

Vacuum / suction suspension—a soft liner which is used in socket with a valve allowing a vacuum type seal once the limb is donned.

## **Problems following amputation**

Neuroma – A collection of fibrous tissue around the end of a severed nerve.

Phantom pain - The feeling of pain/discomfort in the absent limb following an amputation

Phantom sensation – Sensory awareness of the part of an amputated limb that is no longer present – a non-painful condition

Pistoning – The movement of the socket relative to the residual limb due to poor fit or lack of suction/friction

# More Information

Please note that BACPAR disclaims any responsibility or liability for the content of any linked websites or Organisations.

## Organisations related to Amputee Rehabilitation

- **British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association (BLESMA)** - [www.blesma.org](http://www.blesma.org)
- **The Disabled Living Foundation** - [www.dlf.org.uk](http://www.dlf.org.uk)
- **British Amputee and Les Autres Sports Association (BALASA)** - E-mail: [balasaoffice@aol.com](mailto:balasaoffice@aol.com) - Tel 0120 449 4308.
- **Finding Your Feet Charity**—<http://findingyourfeet.net/>
- **REACH** - [www.reach.org.uk](http://www.reach.org.uk) Pearl Assurance House, Brook Street, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0BN Tel 0845 1306 225
- **Steps** - [www.steps-charity.org.uk](http://www.steps-charity.org.uk) - Wright House, Crouchley Lane, Lymm, Cheshire WA13 0AS Tel 01925 750271
- **Special Interest Group Amputee Management (SIGAM)** - c/o British Society of Rehabilitation Medicine (BSRM), Royal College of Physicians, 11 St Andrews Place, London, NW1 4CE - Tel 01992 638865, Fax 01992 638905 - email: [admin@bsrm.co.uk](mailto:admin@bsrm.co.uk)

## Websites:

- [www.csp.org.uk](http://www.csp.org.uk) - This site is the home page of the CSP
- [The iCSP amputee rehabilitation network](#) is available to all CSP and BACPAR members



- **Scottish Physiotherapy Amputation Research Group (SPARG)** - <http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/sparg.aspx>
- [www.ispo.org.uk](http://www.ispo.org.uk) - The International Society of Prosthetics and Orthotics, United Kingdom
- [www.bapo.com](http://www.bapo.com) - The British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists
- [www.vascularsociety.org.uk](http://www.vascularsociety.org.uk) - The Vascular Society
- [www.limbless-association.org](http://www.limbless-association.org) - The Limbless Association
- [www.limblossinformationcentre.com](http://www.limblossinformationcentre.com) - A resource centre for those with acquired and congenital limb loss.
- [www.limbpower.com](http://www.limbpower.com) A charity who aim to offer relief to the physically disabled by aiding rehabilitation and improving the quality of life through the medium of recreational and competitive sports and arts
- [www.limbcare.org](http://www.limbcare.org) - A Charity which aims to supply information that is free and available to anyone who wishes to learn more about life as an amputee and the opportunities available to the limb impaired.
- [www.parasport.org.uk](http://www.parasport.org.uk) - Parasport has been designed to inform, educate, inspire and signpost disabled people to high quality sporting opportunities.
- <http://www.wcpt.org/ar> -This is the World Confederation Physical Therapy Network for Amputee Rehabilitation. Open to Physiotherapists who are a member of a WCPT member organisation e.g. the CSP -who have an interest in or who work in Amputee rehabilitation.
- [http://www.physio-pedia.com/Amputee\\_Rehabilitation](http://www.physio-pedia.com/Amputee_Rehabilitation)—A useful online resource for many aspects of amputee physio

Website: <http://bacpar.csp.org.uk>  
 Twitter: @BACPAR\_official  
 Facebook: **BACPAR\_official**

