

After an amputation of the leg: stump care and exercises

After an amputation of the leg



Count the weeks from the day of your operation. The date is on your discharge card.

If your doctor wrote a different plan on your prescription, follow that instead of this page.

Weeks 0–2

Let the wound heal. Keep the stump bandaged as we showed you, and keep the hip and knee straight when you lie and sit. Get out of bed from the first days, with help and a walker, and learn to move safely between bed, chair and toilet. Pump the ankle of the other foot often to protect against clots. Feeling that the missing part of the leg is still there is common and normal after an amputation.

Weight bearing None through the stump. Full on the other leg, with a walker, as we showed you.



Lying and sitting with the stump straight

Lie flat with the stump straight on the bed. Never put a pillow under the stump or the knee, or between the thighs, never let the stump hang over the edge of the bed, and do not rest it on the walker or crutch handle. After a below-knee amputation, sit with the knee kept straight on the board or chair we advised, and do not sit for long hours. If you can, lie on your front for a while a few times a day.

All day

Every day

✓ Should feel

The hip and knee staying straight

✗ Should not feel

The hip or knee getting stiff in a bent position — tell us



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Nallasopara West 87665 22099 · 12–2 pm, 7.30–9.30 pm

Virar East 92702 84859 · 5.30–7.30 pm

Monday to Saturday · Closed on Sunday. Urgent injury such as a fracture or dislocation? Please call first.



Bandaging the stump

Use the elastic bandage exactly as we showed you. Start at the end of the stump and wrap upwards in a figure of eight, firmest at the end and looser towards the top, with no creases and never a tight band round the top. Re-wrap it whenever it loosens, and wear it day and night except when washing. If the wound is still open or leaking, bandage only as we have shown you for that wound.

All day

Ask us when to stop

✓ Should feel

Firm, even pressure, tightest at the end of the stump

✗ Should not feel

Throbbing, numbness, or a tight band at the top — unwrap it and start again



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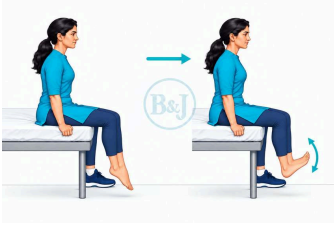
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Ankle pumps

Pump the foot of the other leg up and down to keep the blood moving.

20 times

Every hour while awake

✓ **Should feel**

The calf working

✗ **Should not feel**

Calf pain or swelling — tell us



Buttock squeeze

Lie on your back with the legs straight. Squeeze the buttocks together, hold, then relax.

Hold 5 seconds

10 times

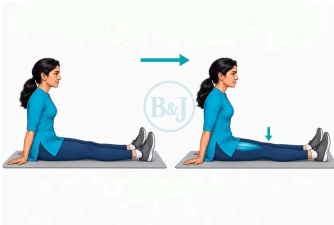
3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

The buttocks tightening

✗ **Should not feel**

Back pain



Quad sets

Lie or sit with the stump straight on the bed. Tighten the thigh muscle of the stump, hold, then relax. Then do the same with the other leg.

Hold 5 seconds

10 times

3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

The thigh working

✗ **Should not feel**

Sharp pain in the stump — tell us



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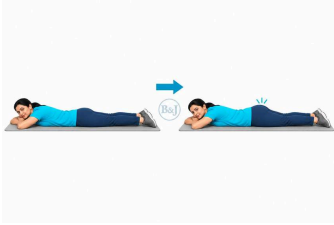
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Lying on the front, buttock squeeze

Lie on your front with the legs straight. Squeeze the buttocks and press the hips into the bed, hold, then relax.

Hold 5 seconds

10 times

3 times a day

✓ Should feel

The buttocks working and the front of the hip stretching

✗ Should not feel

Back pain

Not yet A pillow under the stump or the knee, or between the thighs. Letting the stump hang over the edge of the bed, or resting it on the walker or crutch. Sitting for long hours with the hip and knee bent. Any weight through the stump.

Move to the next stage only after we have seen you, and the X-ray if one was planned.



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Weeks 2–6

Stitches out once the wound has healed. Keep bandaging the stump day and night, to shape it for an artificial leg. Check the stump skin every day. Once the wound has healed, touch, tap and gently rub the stump with your own hand each day, so it gets used to touch — gently, never forceful massage, and no bone-setter. Pain felt in the missing part of the leg (phantom pain) is common and often eases with time; tell us if it troubles you, as we can treat it. Carry on with the earlier exercises.

Weight bearing None through the stump. Full on the other leg, with the walker or crutches.



Check the stump skin every day

Every day, and every time the bandage or the artificial leg comes off, look at the whole stump, including the end and the back, using a mirror or asking someone to look. Wash it with mild soap and water and dry it well, especially in the skin folds.

Every day

Takes 2 minutes

✓ Should feel

Skin that is clean and unbroken

✗ Should not feel

A red mark that does not fade, a blister or a sore — tell us



Bandaging the stump

Use the elastic bandage exactly as we showed you. Start at the end of the stump and wrap upwards in a figure of eight, firmest at the end and looser towards the top, with no creases and never a tight band round the top. Re-wrap it whenever it loosens, and wear it day and night except when washing. If the wound is still open or leaking, bandage only as we have shown you for that wound.

All day

Ask us when to stop

✓ Should feel

Firm, even pressure, tightest at the end of the stump

✗ Should not feel

Throbbing, numbness, or a tight band at the top — unwrap it and start again



Pressing the stump down

Lie on your back with a firm rolled towel under the stump. Press the stump down into the towel, keeping the other leg relaxed, hold, then relax.

Hold 5 seconds

10 times

3 times a day

✓ Should feel

The buttock and the back of the thigh working

✗ Should not feel

Back pain, or pain at the scar or the end of the stump



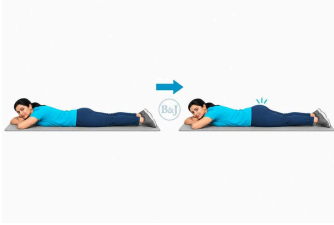
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Lying on the front, buttock squeeze

Lie on your front with the legs straight. Squeeze the buttocks and press the hips into the bed, hold, then relax.

Hold 5 seconds

10 times

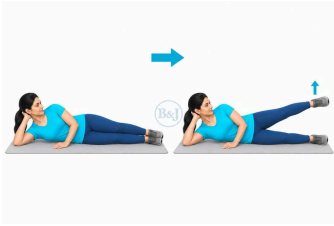
3 times a day

✓ **Should feel**

The buttocks working and the front of the hip stretching

✗ **Should not feel**

Back pain



Side-lying hip lift

Lie on the UNAFFECTED side. Lift the top leg straight up.

10 times

Daily

✓ **Should feel**

The side of the hip working

✗ **Should not feel**

Back pain

Not yet A pillow under the stump or the knee, or between the thighs. Letting the stump hang over the edge of the bed, or resting it on the walker or crutch. Sitting for long hours with the hip and knee bent. Any weight through the stump.

Move to the next stage only after we have seen you, and the X-ray if one was planned.



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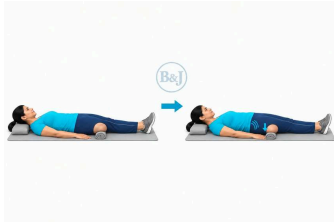
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Weeks 6–12

Getting ready for the artificial leg. When the wound has fully healed and the swelling has settled, we will send you to the limb-fitting centre to be measured. Keep the stump bandaged, or wear the stump sock we gave you, so it keeps its shape. Build up the strength of the hip, and the balance on the other leg. Carry on with the earlier exercises.

Weight bearing None through the stump until the artificial leg is fitted. Then only as the limb-fitting team teaches you.



Pressing the stump down

Lie on your back with a firm rolled towel under the stump. Press the stump down into the towel, keeping the other leg relaxed, hold, then relax.

Hold 5 seconds

10 times

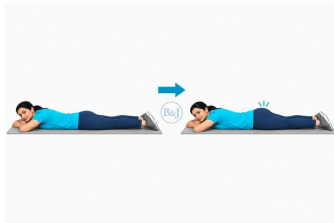
3 times a day

✓ Should feel

The buttock and the back of the thigh working

✗ Should not feel

Back pain, or pain at the scar or the end of the stump



Lying on the front, buttock squeeze

Lie on your front with the legs straight. Squeeze the buttocks and press the hips into the bed, hold, then relax.

Hold 5 seconds

10 times

3 times a day

✓ Should feel

The buttocks working and the front of the hip stretching

✗ Should not feel

Back pain



Side-lying hip lift

Lie on the UNAFFECTED side. Lift the top leg straight up.

15 times

Daily

✓ Should feel

The side of the hip working

✗ Should not feel

Back pain



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Single-leg balance

Stand on one leg beside a worktop.

30 seconds

3 times a day

✓ Should feel

Working to stay steady

✗ Should not feel

Losing balance — hold on



Check the stump skin every day

Every day, and every time the bandage or the artificial leg comes off, look at the whole stump, including the end and the back, using a mirror or asking someone to look. Wash it with mild soap and water and dry it well, especially in the skin folds.

Every day

Takes 2 minutes

✓ Should feel

Skin that is clean and unbroken

✗ Should not feel

A red mark that does not fade, a blister or a sore — tell us

Not yet A pillow under the stump or the knee, or between the thighs. Sitting for long hours with the hip and knee bent. Walking on the artificial leg before the limb-fitting team has taught you.

Move to the next stage only after we have seen you, and the X-ray if one was planned.



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Month 3 onwards

Walking with the artificial leg. Build up the time you wear it, as the limb-fitting team teaches you, and check the stump every time it comes off. The stump keeps shrinking for some months, so the socket may need changing — come back if it starts to feel loose or to rub. Keep the hip strong and straight.

Weight bearing Through the artificial leg, as the limb-fitting team teaches you. Keep the stick or walker until you are steady without it.



Wearing the artificial leg

Put the artificial leg on as the limb-fitting team taught you, over a clean, smooth stump sock. Wear it for a short time at first and build up a little each day. Take it off if it rubs or hurts, and check the stump every time you take it off. If the stump has a sore, do not wear the leg until we have seen the sore.

Little and often

Every day

✓ Should feel

Firm, even contact, with no rubbing

✗ Should not feel

Rubbing, a red mark that does not fade, or the socket feeling loose — tell us



Check the stump skin every day

Every day, and every time the bandage or the artificial leg comes off, look at the whole stump, including the end and the back, using a mirror or asking someone to look. Wash it with mild soap and water and dry it well, especially in the skin folds.

Every time

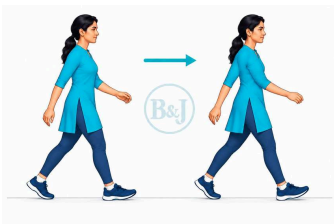
Every day

✓ Should feel

Skin that is clean and unbroken

✗ Should not feel

A red mark that does not fade, a blister or a sore — tell us



Walking

Walk daily. Build the distance slowly.

Little and often

Every day

✓ Should feel

Easier walking over weeks

✗ Should not feel

Swelling next day — do less



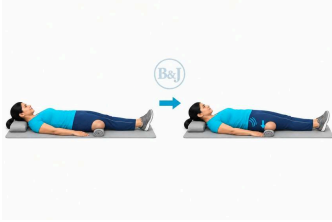
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Pressing the stump down

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10 times

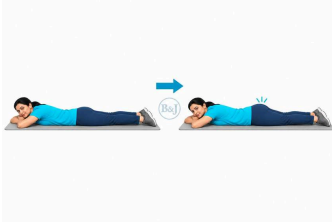
Daily

✓ Should feel

The buttock and the back of the thigh working

✗ Should not feel

Back pain, or pain at the scar or the end of the stump



Lying on the front, buttock squeeze

Lie on your front with the legs straight. Squeeze the buttocks and press the hips into the bed, hold, then relax.

10 times

Daily

✓ Should feel

The buttocks working and the front of the hip stretching

✗ Should not feel

Back pain

Not yet Wearing the artificial leg over a sore or broken skin. Squatting, sitting on the floor or using an Indian toilet — until we have told you it is safe.

Stop and telephone us if

- Sudden breathlessness or chest pain — go to the nearest hospital
- The calf of the other leg becomes swollen, tight or painful — go to the nearest hospital
- The stump becomes hot, red and swollen, the wound leaks, a sore gets deeper or starts to leak, or you have a fever — come the same day
- The skin at the end of the stump turns dark or black, or the wound opens — come the same day
- A sore, blister or broken skin on the stump — stop wearing the artificial leg until we have seen it
- A spot on the stump that gives an electric-shock pain when touched, or phantom pain that is severe
- The hip or knee no longer straightens fully
- A fall, especially onto the stump



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