

Patient Education

Below Knee Prosthetic Shrinker

General Description:

One of the initial steps in preparing your residual limb for a prosthesis is with the use of a shrinker. A shrinker is a tight, elastic stocking that equally compresses all parts of the residual limb.

The purpose of the shrinker is to:

- 1) Reduce the amount of fluid or edema in the limb.
- 2) Keep the residual limb at a more consistent volume.
- 3) “Shape” the residual limb so that it is a more ideal shape and size to fit into a prosthesis.

Application:

- 1) Using both hands, scrunch down the shrinker to the seam on the bottom and stretch the opening. The seam of the shrinker should be horizontal or from side to side.
- 2) Pull the shrinker up on the limb and pull up the sides as you travel up the limb.
- 3) The shrinker should completely cover the knee and go onto the thigh. The shrinker is very snug. If your limb is still healing, it may be difficult to put on initially. It may be easier to put on with assistance from another person (See Figure 1) or with the use of a donning can (See Figure 2).



Figure 1

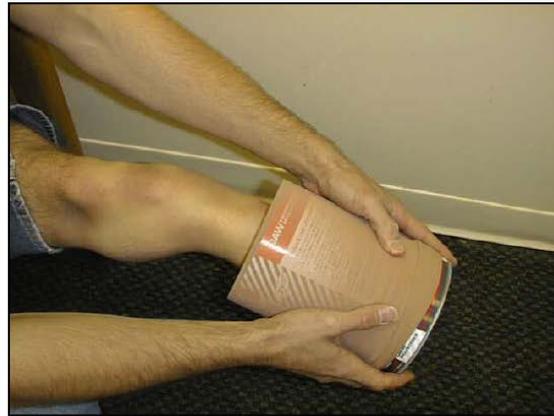


Figure 2

- 4) Make sure the shrinker is pulled taut with no wrinkles. The shrinker must be pulled up all of the way at all times. This may require you to pull up the shrinker several times throughout a day to keep it snug. The shrinker may fall off while you are sleeping. If this happens, just remember to pull it back on as soon as you can. A skin glue is available if necessary to keep shrinker in place.
- 5) Wear the shrinker at all times, day and night, except when you are bathing yourself or cleaning the shrinker. When you are cleaning the shrinker, a second shrinker or an elastic bandage should be applied to the limb to prevent swelling.
- 6) Remember to keep your leg straight when sitting or lying down. Do not sit with your knee bent.

Cleaning and Maintenance:

Follow the manufacturer's directions to clean the shrinker. Most recommend **hand or machine wash on low temperature settings with mild soap. Machine dry on low or hang to dry. Never use bleach on your shrinker, as this will destroy the elastic.**