

Patient Education

Above Knee 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. Above knee prosthetic shrinkers either have 1) a hip belt or 2) a silicone band to help hold them up. 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 from back to front with the opening or shorter length of the shrinker toward the inside of the leg (See Figure 1 below). For shrinkers with a silicone band, orient the shrinker so the seam runs left to right. The top of the shrinker should come all the way up the inside of the thigh (See Figures 1 & 2 below).
- 2) Pull the shrinker up on the limb and pull up the sides as you travel up the limb. 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 or with the use of a donning can (see Figure 3).
- 3) The shrinker should go completely onto the thigh and the waist belt must be attached around the waist.
- 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.
- 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.

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.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3