

# Limb loss: a glossary of key words

## A

**Abduction** – angling part of the body / prosthesis away from the body's midline

**Adduction** – angling part of the body / prosthesis towards the body's midline

**AFO (Ankle Foot Orthosis)** – a brace that supports or controls the ankle

**Alignment** – the way the prosthesis is set up. This is concerned mainly with the angle of the socket and foot

**Amputation** – the loss or absence of all or part of a limb

**Ankle disarticulation** – usually called a Symes amputation involving amputation through the ankle joint

**Assistive equipment** – devices that assist in performance or mobility; for example ramps or bars, changes in furniture or other objects heights, environmental control units and specifically designed devices

**Atrophy** – when a muscle reduces in size through reduced use

## B

**Bilateral** – double amputation of both upper or lower limbs

**Bionics** – the application of engineering or mechanical principles to biological systems such as the human body

**Bumper** – a part installed into a prosthetic component to aid extension or resistance or to soften impact at the end of a range of motion.

## C

**Check socket** – a temporary socket intended to test the fit and alignment of a prosthesis prior to a permanent prosthesis being made

**Cosmesis** – a cosmetic cover for the mechanical elements of prosthesis

**Congenital limb deficiency** – absence of part or all of a limb at birth

**Cover** – also referred to as the anatomical form, cosmesis or finish – this is the external shape and surface detail of prosthesis. The cover may be incredibly high definition and life-like, or it can be a basic anatomical shape

## D

**Digital amputation** – toe or finger amputation

**Dorsiflexion** – resultant posture of the foot when the toes are pulling up

**Donning** – putting on a prosthesis or orthosis

**Durometer** – evaluation of the hardness a material used as part of the Cover. Normally referring to polymers, elastomers or rubbers

**Dynamic foot** – a type of prosthetic foot that stores and releases walking energy to more realistically replicate the action of a natural foot to promote walking action – also referred to as an Energy Storing Foot

## E

**Endoskeletal prosthesis** – prosthetic device whereby the support offered to the body is internal, much like the human skeleton

**Exoskeletal prosthesis** – prosthetic device whereby the support offered to the body is external

## F

**Femur** – thigh bone

**Fibula** – the thinner of the two bones in the shin.

**Forequarter amputation** – amputation removing part of the shoulder and arm

## G

**Gait analysis** – a review of a person's walking pattern, especially when wearing a prosthesis

## H

**Hemipelvectomy** – amputation of the leg involving removal of part of the pelvis with the limb. This is also called a hindquarter amputation

**Hip disarticulation** – amputation of the leg through the hip joint

## I

**Ischial tuberosity** – the thick part of the pelvis in the buttocks, used to take weight in above knee prosthesis, commonly called the sitting bone

## K

**Knee disarticulation** – amputation through the knee joint

## L

**Liner** – a removable sleeve that fits over the stump/residual limb. The liner acts as a cushion and interface with the socket of the prosthesis

## M

**Multiaxial foot** – prosthetic foot imitating ankle movement and allowing better control and balance on uneven ground

## N

**Neuroma** – fibrous tissue around the end of a severed nerve

## O

**Oedema** – when a body part suffers swelling or produces excess fluid

**Osseointegration** – a direct connection between living bone and a load-bearing artificial implant, which has structural and functional benefits

## P

**Partial Foot** – amputation where only part of the foot is removed

**Patella** – kneecap

**Patella tendon** – a thick tendon between the kneecap and the top of the shin which takes weight well so is often used for support in below knee prostheses

**Pylon** – the pole in the prosthesis that gives it height

**Plantarflexion** – resultant posture of the foot where the toes point down

**Phantom pain** – pain or discomfort in the absent limb after undergoing an amputation

**Phantom sensation** – sensory awareness of the part of an amputated limb that is no longer present

**Pistoning** – the movement of the socket relative to the residual limb as a result of poor fit

**Prosthesis** – an artificial limb worn following amputation of a body part, either for cosmetic or functional

**Prosthetist** – a professional specialising in the design and fitting of artificial limbs

**Patella tendon bearing (PTB)** – a type of below knee prosthesis in which much of the weight is taken on the patella-tendon

## R

**Residual limb** – an alternative way of describing the stump formed following part amputation of a limb

**Rigid dressing** – a hard fibreglass cover used to protect the stump and normally fitted shortly after the amputation

## S

**Sach Foot** – a lightweight prosthetic foot that has a fixed ankle

**Shoulder disarticulation** – amputation at the shoulder joint

**Shrinker** – a compression sock specifically for stumps that controls swelling after amputation surgery

**Silicon/gel liner** – a rubbery synthetic liner material that rolls onto the stump

**Silicon suspension (SSS)** – a gel liner that engages in a lock inside the prosthesis in order to aid suspension

**Sleeve suspension** – a sleeve that is rolled over a below the knee prosthesis and onto the thigh for suspension

**Stump volume** – the phrase referring to the size of the stump in relation to the socket of the prosthesis

**Socket** – the portion of the prosthesis that is custom made to accommodate the amputee's residual limb

**Socket relief** – the space/void created in a prosthetic socket in order to reduce pressure over sensitive areas of the stump

**Stump sock** – a liner made specifically for stumps

**Suspension** – how the prosthesis is held on

**Supracondylar prosthesis** – similar to PTB but comes in and over the knee to hold it on

**Symes amputation** – amputation of the foot through the ankle joint

## T

**Transmetatarsal-phalangeal amputation (TMP)** – amputation of the toes through the ball of the foot

**Transmetatarsal amputation (TMT)** – amputation of the toes to just behind the ball of the foot

**Transfemoral** – an above knee amputation. Also referred to as an AK amputation

**Transhumeral** – an above elbow amputation

**Transtibial** – a below the knee amputation, also referred to as a 'BK' amputation

**Transradial** – a below the elbow amputation

**Tibia** – the larger of the two bones in the shin

## U

**Ulcer** – a lesion or opening of the skin

**Unilateral** – affecting only one side

## V

**Volume loss** – a description of the change in stump shape/size that can potentially lead to in an ill fitting prosthesis

**Volume changes** – fluctuation in the size and shape of the stump, related to body fluid levels and caused by changes in the weather, health etc

## W

**Wrist disarticulation** – amputation through the wrist joint

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**If you have any questions for our specialist amputations team, please get in touch..**

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