

Life after limb loss: rehabilitation

An amputation can be a very significant procedure and you will likely require a multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals throughout the process. Each individual will be different in terms of the surgery undertaken and their objectives for rehabilitation. There is no 'one size fits all' but this list sets out the key professionals who you may work with as part of your rehabilitation journey.

Rehabilitation consultant

Usually, the clinical specialist in charge is a consultant in rehabilitation medicine and a specialist in prosthetics. This consultant will usually lead the multidisciplinary team (set out further below) to provide a programme of carefully coordinated rehabilitation services tailored around the needs of the amputee.

A rehabilitation consultant will work closely with the orthopaedic surgeons in advance of the operation taking place and will help prepare for the support that will be needed afterwards.

Prosthetist

A prosthetist is a specialist in prosthetics, i.e. the artificial limb/device that replaces a missing body part. Prostheses are intended to restore normal functions of a missing body part as far as possible.

A prosthetist will be crucial to assessing your suitability for using a prosthetic and the specific type/size that may be appropriate. Successful use of a prosthetic often involves many appointments and trials to ensure an optimal fit in order to maximise comfort and function.

Physiotherapist

The physiotherapist's role is to plan and implement a treatment programme with the aim of restoring function and independence. A tailored plan will be devised around your specific circumstances.

Where a prosthetic is being explored, the physiotherapist will work closely with the prosthetist to prepare you for a prosthetic and to support you once it has been prepared. For some amputees, they feel they have greater independence using a wheelchair than a prosthetic. Again, a physiotherapist will tailor the exercise programme around the individual's needs and preferences.

Occupational therapist (OT)

Occupational therapists are instrumental in helping you return to independent living as far as possible and to support you in doing activities that matter to you. Typical activities that an OT may assist with are as follows:

- Adapting ways of getting dressed safely and advising on suitable clothing.
- Increasing independence in personal care activities such as washing, getting in and out of the bath and using the toilet.
- Regaining independence in the kitchen to prepare drinks and meals.
- Using a wheelchair safely and effectively.

There can be a wide range of tasks that an OT can help with in addition to those listed above, such as advice on driving, returning to hobbies after limbs loss, developing new interests, etc.

Specialist nurse

The specialist nurse will work collaboratively with the consultant surgeons, ward staff and other healthcare team. This central role means they are well equipped to provide information and support for amputees and their families throughout the treatment and rehabilitation, as well as coordinating various aspects of care that are required. The specialist nurse can help with a wide range of issues, from practical advice on changing dressings through to providing emotional support throughout the journey.

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

Call us for free on:
0800 923 2068

Or email:
limbloss@roydswithyking.com

**More information is available
on our website at:**

roydswithyking.com/limb-loss