

The Circleg Guide



for Prosthetic Users

circleg

This guide was created in collaboration with experts including; Ursina Camenzind (Physiotherapist at Reha Bellikon); Lizzie Carey (Prosthetist); and Dr. Alex Munyambabazi (medical professional, amputee, and founder of the Amputee Self-Help Network Uganda).

Bringing the guide to life with beautiful illustrations, Kenyan artist Gift Kyansimire has crafted each visual with a lot of love.

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**‘When you
know better,
you do better’**

Maya Angelou

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about Circleg



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Whether you're new to life with a prosthetic or simply looking for helpful tips, this guide is designed to support you in navigating daily challenges as an amputee. From general knowledge sharing to practical advice on mobility and health to tips for emotional well-being, this guide offers insight into how to manage everyday activities with confidence and independence.

At Circleg, we believe that knowledge empowers and that support makes all the difference. This guide, created with expert insights, is here to equip you with the tools to not just adapt, but to truly thrive. However, please note that this is not a comprehensive medical guide but rather a resource to raise awareness and share general knowledge on key topics. For personalized advice, always consult with your healthcare professional.

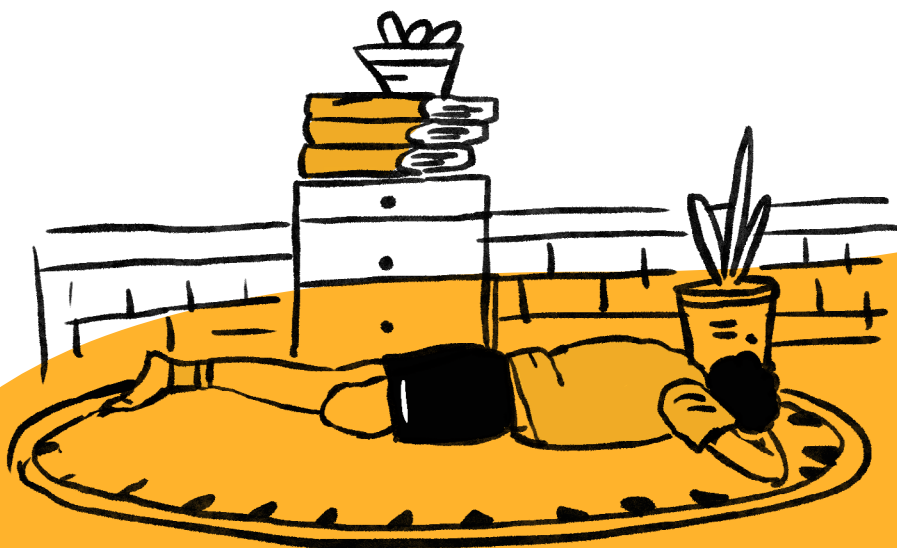
Remember, you are never alone on this journey.

General Care



Contraction Prevention

After an amputation, your muscles and joints can become stiff if they're not stretched regularly. This stiffness, called a contracture, can make walking with a prosthesis difficult. Simple daily exercises help keep your hip and knee flexible—so you can move more freely and comfortably!



Lie on your stomach to stretch your hip and keep it flexible. Do this several times a day.



Fully extend your knee often to keep it straight.



Stump Care

Caring for your stump is essential for comfort with your prosthesis. Before getting a prosthetic, your stump needs to have a stable size. Keeping your skin clean and checking it regularly helps prevent irritation, infections, and pressure sores—so you can move with confidence every day!



Wash your stump daily and check your skin for any redness or irritation.



Wrap your stump with a bandage to reduce swelling and shape it for your prosthesis. Ask your prosthetist or physiotherapist for the best technique.

Phantom Sensation/Pain

After an amputation, it's normal to feel sensations—or even pain—in the missing limb. This is called phantom pain, and it's your brain and nerves adjusting. Everyone experiences it differently. It's not a bad thing to still feel your limb, but if it becomes painful, talk to your prosthetist or physiotherapist. There are ways to manage and reduce discomfort. You're not alone—exchanging with other amputees can be helpful and reassuring.



Staying Active

Movement is key to your well-being, even without a prosthetic. Staying active helps maintain strength, balance, and circulation, making prosthetic use easier. Simple exercises and daily movement boost energy, prevent stiffness, and support your health. Every small step counts—keep moving!



Psycho-social Support

An amputation is not just a physical change—it also affects your emotions, confidence, and daily life. It's normal to experience a range of feelings, and you don't have to navigate them alone. Psycho-social support can help you process challenges, build resilience, and find strength in community. Whether through counseling, peer support, or simple conversations, reaching out can make all the difference.



Prosthetic Care

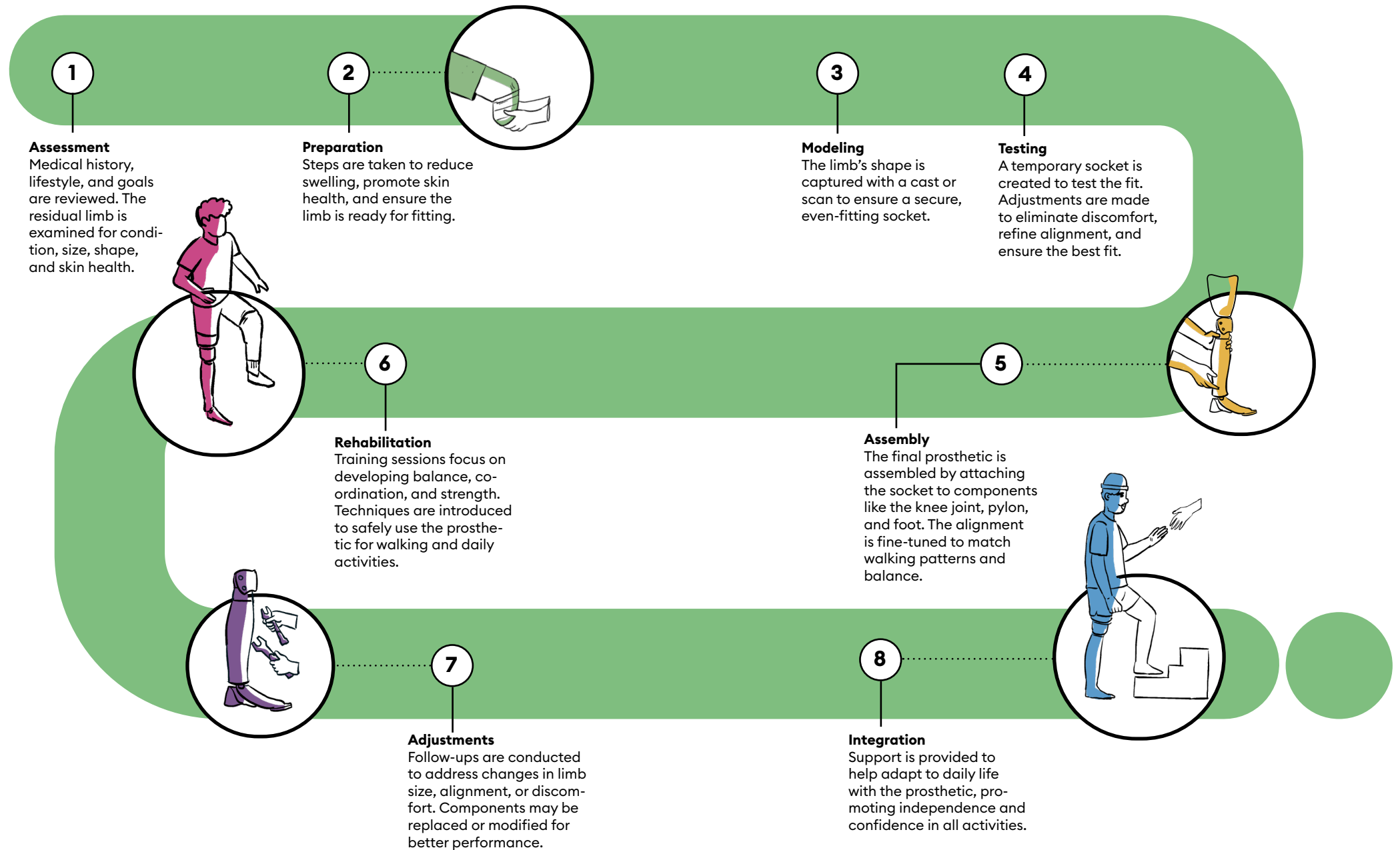


General Tips and Tricks

- ✓ **Consistency is key**
Wear your prosthesis daily – even if just for a short time—to stay used to it and strengthen your muscles.
- ✓ **Clean your prosthesis and liner regularly**
Daily cleaning prevents skin irritation and extends the life of your device. Clean only with water. Avoid cleaning agents and solvents; use mild hand soap if needed. Let everything dry thoroughly.
- ✓ **Check your skin daily**
Especially in the beginning, inspect your residual limb for any pressure points, blisters, or redness. Early detection helps avoid complications.
- ✓ **Build up slowly**
If you're just starting out, don't rush. Gradually increase your walking time and activity level to avoid overuse or fatigue.
- ✓ **Wear the right shoes**
Always wear shoes with the same heel height your prosthesis was aligned with. Switching can affect balance and cause discomfort.

- ✓ **Stay active**
An active lifestyle supports mobility, circulation, and mental well-being. Simple exercises like walking, stretching, or bodyweight workouts go a long way.
- ✓ **Hydration matters**
Drinking enough water can help manage swelling in your limb and improve overall energy levels.
- ✓ **Connect with others**
Join support groups, online communities, or events like Circleg Tribe—it helps to share experiences and learn from others.
- ✓ **Listen to your body**
Pain, discomfort, or changes in fit are signs that something might be off. Don't ignore them—talk to your prosthetist.
- ✓ **Carry a small emergency kit**
Include things like extra socks, liner spray, pain relief cream, or band-aids—especially when you're on the go for longer hours.

Fitting Process Overview



Preparation

Walking with a prosthesis takes practice, but the right preparation makes all the difference. Strengthening your muscles, improving balance, and getting used to your prosthetic limb step by step will help you walk with more ease and confidence. Let's get started!



First Steps

Taking your first steps with a prosthesis is an exciting milestone! Start slow, focus on balance, and trust the process. With practice and patience, walking will feel more natural every day. Repeat these exercises daily in the beginning!

below knee prosthesis



1

Stand on both legs and slowly shift your weight from side to side.



2

Put prosthetic in front and put weight on it. Stay upright.



3

Place your prosthetic leg back, shift your weight onto it, and keep your posture upright.



4

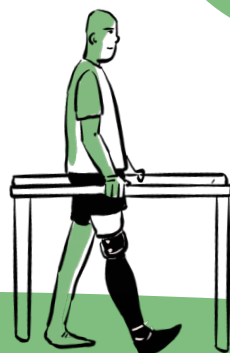
Swing your prosthetic leg forward, focus on the movement, and repeat.

above knee prosthesis



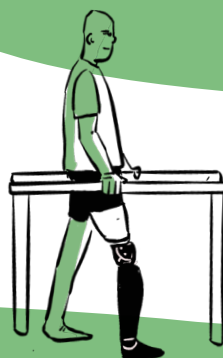
1

Stand on both legs and slowly shift your weight from side to side.



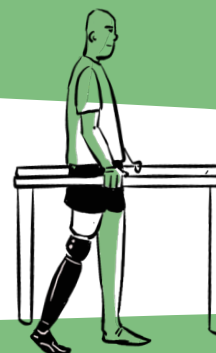
2

Place your prosthetic leg forward, push your stump back to lock the knee, and shift your weight onto it. Keep your posture upright!



3

Hold onto the bars and try to bend / unlock your knee to understand and feel how it works.



4

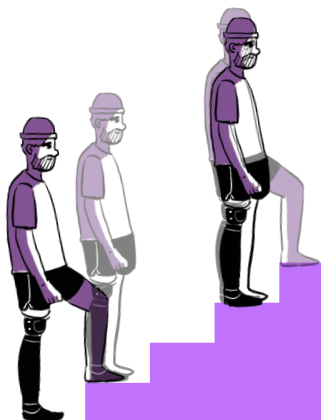
Step back with your prosthetic leg, press your stump back to lock the knee, and shift your weight onto it. Keep your posture upright!



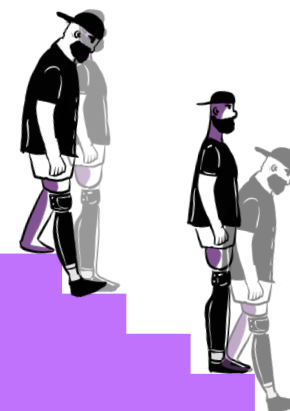
5

Try to release your knee and swing your prosthetic leg forward.

Walking Stairs



Step up with your sound leg, then bring your prosthetic leg to the same level.



above knee prosthesis

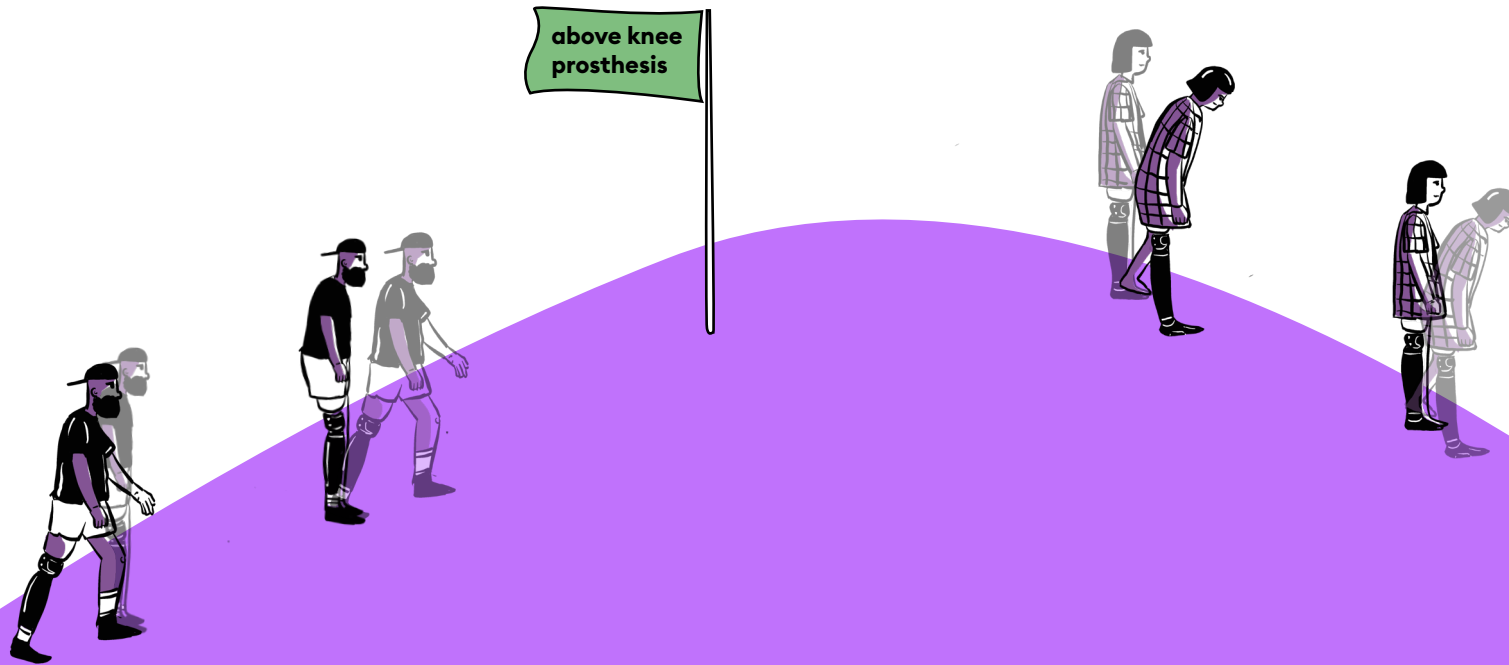
Step down with your prosthetic leg, keeping the knee stable, then bring your sound leg to the same level.



below knee prosthesis

Place your prosthetic foot on the edge, then step down with your sound leg.

Walking up- & downhill

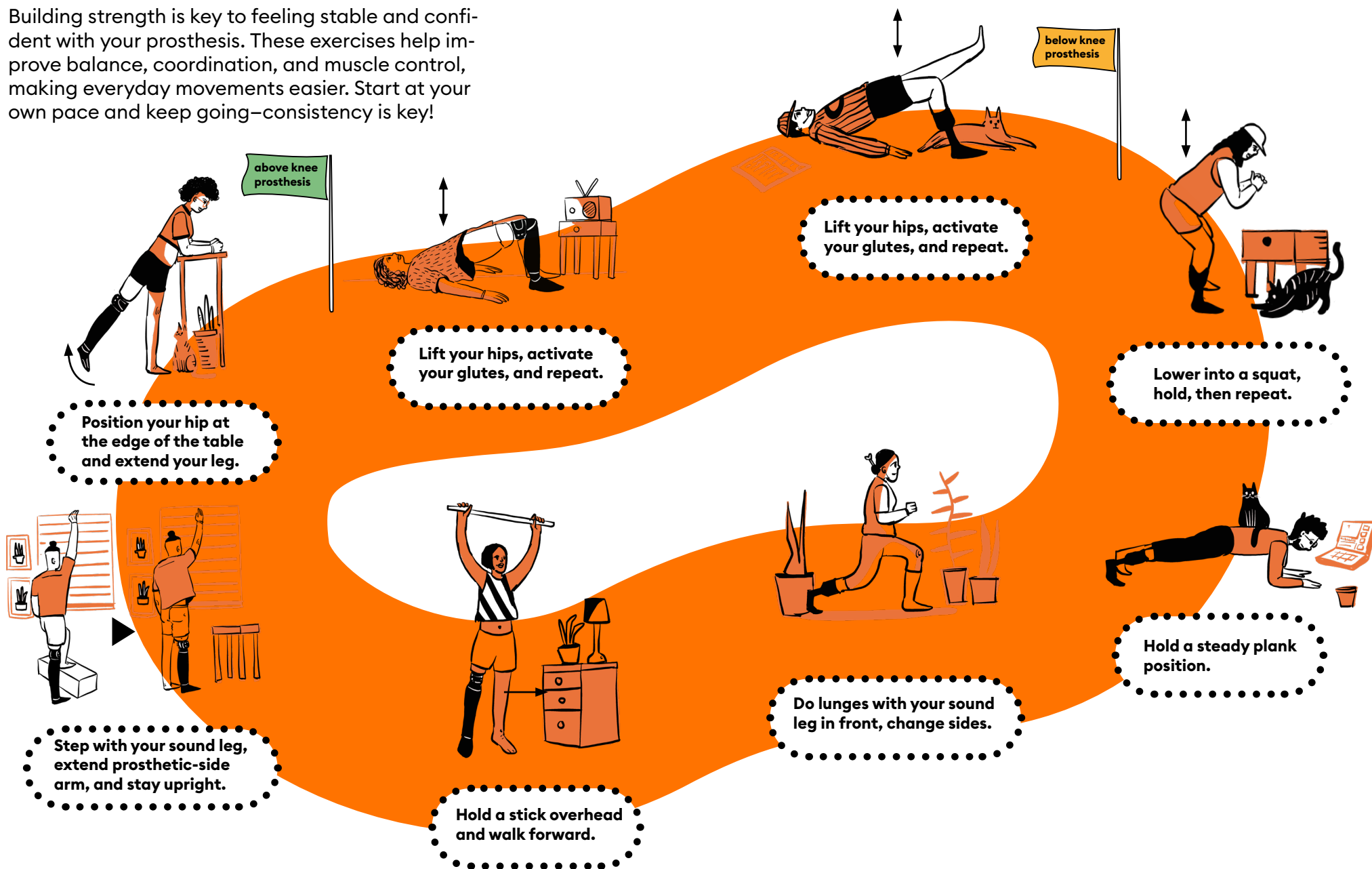


Take a big step up with your sound leg, then bring your prosthetic leg close. The heel of your prosthetic foot will stay off the ground.

Take a small step down with your prosthetic leg, then bring sound leg to the same level.

Exercises

Building strength is key to feeling stable and confident with your prosthesis. These exercises help improve balance, coordination, and muscle control, making everyday movements easier. Start at your own pace and keep going—consistency is key!





**Questions
you might
have**



Living with a prosthetic often comes with questions. This section covers some of the most common ones—offering practical answers to support your everyday life.

1 How long will it take to get used to my prosthesis?

Everyone's journey is different, but with patience, practice, and proper guidance, most people adapt over time. It's normal for the process to feel challenging at first—progress comes step by step. Stay consistent with your exercises and don't hesitate to ask for support from your care team.

2 What should I do if my prosthesis feels uncomfortable or causes pain?

Discomfort is common in the beginning, but pain should not be ignored. If your socket doesn't fit well or causes skin issues, contact your prosthetist. Adjustments are a normal part of the process, especially in the early weeks and months.

3 Can I do sports or physical activities with my prosthesis?

In order to do specific sports—like running or other high-impact activities—you'll need a special type of prosthetic designed for that purpose. Standard prosthetic legs are not made for intense physical strain. However, an active lifestyle is highly recommended and can include walking, general mobility exercises, bodyweight workouts, and low-impact activities like yoga. These help you build strength, improve balance, and support your overall well-being. Always consult your prosthetist before trying a new activity to make sure you're using the right prosthetic setup and staying safe.

4 How do I take care of my residual limb and my prosthesis?

Daily cleaning of both your limb and your socket is essential. Use mild soap and water on your limb, and keep the prosthesis clean and dry. Regular hygiene reduces skin issues and ensures comfort. Your care provider can show you the right routines.

5

What if I feel emotionally overwhelmed or isolated?

It's okay to feel low at times. Amputation is a major life change and emotional healing is just as important as physical recovery. Reach out—whether to friends, family, support groups, or mental health professionals. At Circleg, we also offer community events, webinars, and a WhatsApp group to connect with others walking a similar path.

6

How can I improve my balance and mobility?

Physical therapy is key. Your physiotherapist will guide you through targeted exercises that build strength, balance, and confidence. Practicing daily tasks like standing up, sitting down, or walking short distances can make a big difference over time.

7

Will I ever be able to walk naturally again?

With the right prosthetic fit, proper training, and dedication, many amputees develop a smooth and confident gait. It takes time—but yes, many people are able to walk independently and naturally again. Celebrate every small win.

8

What kind of shoes should I wear with my prosthesis?

Shoes have a big impact on how your prosthetic performs and feels—and they also help protect the prosthetic foot. It's important to wear shoes with the same heel height as the ones your prosthetic was originally aligned with. Changing to a different heel height can affect the alignment, reduce stability, and even compromise your safety. If you want to switch to a different shoe model, always consult your prosthetist first to make the necessary adjustments.

9

Where can I get Circleg components or support with fitting?

You can check our website under the section "Access Points" to find certified facilities or health centers near you that offer Circleg prosthetic services and support.

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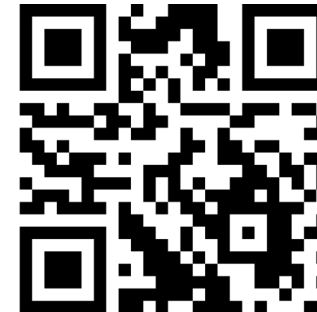
What should I do if I'm struggling financially to access prosthetic care?

You're not alone. We work with partner organizations, donors, and initiatives like the *Freedom of Mobility Packages* to support amputees who can't afford care. Get in touch with us or one of our Access Points to learn more about current programs and how to apply.

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