

British Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in limb

Absence Rehabilitation

SO YOUR PATIENT HAS HAD AN AMPUTATION

A guide for
physiotherapists who do
not specialise in amputee
rehabilitation

Updated March 2022

So your patient has had an amputation

The aim of this guide is to provide physiotherapists with a variety of resources to support them in clinical practice in roles which are not specialised in limb absence rehabilitation. It will signpost you to the most relevant and useful resources, as well as those more local to you and your patient.

This guide is split into five sections:

1. Now what?
2. Useful contacts
3. Helpful publications
4. Amputee rehab glossary
5. More information

Quick Facts:

There are approximately 7,500 lower limb amputations a year in the UK. 85% of these are due to peripheral vascular disease, and over 50% of these have diabetes.

Other common causes of amputation include:

1. Tumour
2. Trauma
3. Congenital
4. Orthopaedic complications

Now what?

So you have a patient with an amputation and you don't know where to start? The good news is that there are lots of valuable and accessible resources available to help you. These are explained in detail throughout this guide. Below is a brief guide for what to consider when treating an amputee patient.

What is the level of amputation? (See page 8 for definitions)

What was the cause of the amputation? This information will help you communicate with other services about the patient.

Are they diabetic? If so, check this is controlled and ensure they have appropriate foot care for their remaining limb (follow the [BACPAR foot care guidelines](#)).

Do they have a problem with their stump? (if pain/sores liaise with their [Regional Amputee Rehabilitation Service](#) or with your patient's district nurse).

Do they wear a prosthetic limb and how active are they once wearing it? (consider how they transfer, or if they need aids to mobilise)

Is there a problem with their prosthetic limb? (if yes, liaise with your patient's local prosthetist.)

Do they experience phantom limb pain or sensations? (check medication and if necessary liaise with local amputee service or patient's GP).

Do they have access to a wheelchair? (often provided via their local occupational therapist or [wheelchair centre](#). Also available to hire from [The Red Cross](#).)

If you have been referred an amputee patient for mobility practise and they are not independently donning their prosthesis and you are unfamiliar with their type of limb, contact their prosthetist /amputee service physiotherapist for guidance on donning the limb correctly. Often these instructions can be given over the phone or an advice sheet can be sent out.

More useful information can be found:

Specialist Counselling—via local Amputation Rehabilitation Consultant

Driving Info:

www.mobility-centres.org.uk

Smoking Cessation Services

<http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree>

Disabled Sport and Physical Activity

<http://www.limbpower.com/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/activities/accessible-activities>

<https://parasport.org.uk/find-an-opportunity>

<http://www.activityalliance.org.uk/>

<https://www.wheelpower.org.uk/>



Useful Contacts

British Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in limb Absence Rehabilitation (BACPAR)

BACPAR is a professional network of the CSP for physiotherapists involved within the specialist field of amputee and prosthetic rehabilitation. You can [contact us](#) via the website and also find details of any upcoming [Regional Study days](#) and information about the Annual BACPAR National Conference.

Via the CSP website, there is also an iCSP Amputee Rehabilitation network for posting discussion topics. If the above does not satisfy your query, please contact the BACPAR Public Relations Officer at bacparpro@gmail.com who will direct your queries to the appropriate Executive Committee member.

If you would like to join BACPAR you can take full advantage of access to our journal, members only area on website and Facebook Group as well as reduced rates to study days and conferences.



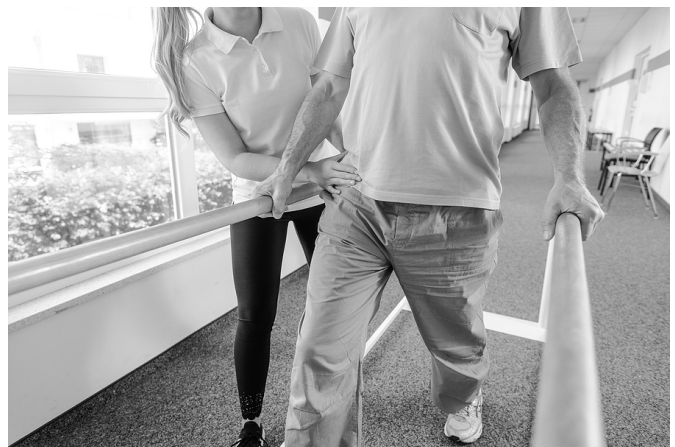
<http://www.bacpar.org>



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Helpful Publications

BACPAR Guidelines:

[Clinical guidelines for the pre and post operative physiotherapy management of adults with lower limb amputation - 2nd edition \(2017\)](#)

[Guidance for Falls prevention in lower limb amputees \(2011\)](#)

[Risks to the contra-lateral foot of unilateral lower limb amputees guideline \(2012\)](#)

[Evidence Based Clinical Guidelines for the Physiotherapy Management of Adults with Lower Limb Prostheses \(2012\)](#)

[Guidance for the Multi-disciplinary team on the management of post-operative residuum oedema in lower limb amputees \(2012\)](#)

[BACPAR Outcome Measure Toolbox Version 2 \(2014\)](#)

[Amputee Rehabilitation Guidance for the Education of Pre Registration Physiotherapy Students \(2013\)](#)

SPARG (Scottish Physiotherapy Amputee Research Group):

[SPARG Resources](#)

[PPAM Aid info for clinicians and patients \(2008\)](#)

[Orthoeurope PPAM Video](#)

[WestMARK Knee guide \(2017\)](#)

PIRPAG exercises:

[Transtibial \(below knee\) amputation](#)

[Transfemoral \(above knee\) amputation](#)

[Gym Ball exercises for Amputee Rehabilitation](#)

Other resources:

[BACPAR public info leaflet](#)

[Lower limb amputation—working together' NCEPOD report \(2014\)](#)

[Ortho Europe Femurette fitting tutorial](#)

[Finding Your Feet YouTube videos- several online and more to come](#)



Amputee Rehab Glossary

Level of amputation

Congenital limb deficiency — Absence of all or part of the limb at the time of birth.

Ankle disarticulation/Symes amputation — Involves amputation of the foot through the ankle joint.

Transtibial — A below the knee amputation.

Knee disarticulation — Amputation through the knee joint.

Transfemoral — An above knee amputation.

Hip disarticulation — Amputation of the leg through the hip joint.

Hemipelvectomy — Amputation of the leg that also involves the removal of part of the pelvis with the limb, also called a hindquarter amputation.

Transradial — A below the elbow amputation.

Transhumeral — An above the elbow amputation.

Shoulder disarticulation — Amputation through the shoulder joint.

Forequarter — An amputation that removes part of the shoulder with the arm.

Amputated limb

Residual limb — Another term for the stump formed following partial amputation of a limb.

Stump volume — refers to volume (measured by circumference) of the stump post-amputation. This may fluctuate in size and shape due to changes in body fluid level that can be caused by residual limb positioning, health issues, use of compression/shrinker socks and weather/temperature etc.

Prosthetic limb

Prosthesis — An artificial limb worn in the absence of a body part.

Prosthetist — A professional specialising in the design, manufacture and fitting of artificial limbs.

Donning/doffing — The act of putting a prosthesis on and taking it off.

Compression sock— Also known as a shrinker sock specifically for stumps, used to control swelling following amputation surgery.

Cosmesis — A cosmetic cover over the mechanical elements of a prosthesis.

Stump sock — Socks that are usually cotton or nylon worn on the stump under the prosthesis.

Liner — A removable sock-like product that fits over the stump/residual limb and acts as a cushion and interface with the socket of the prosthesis. Formed from gel, silicone, foam or plastic.

Suspension

Suspension — How the prosthesis is held on (commonly a knee sleeve/cuff strap/ pin lock/ belt/ shoulder strap).

Patella Tendon Bearing (PTB) — a type of below knee prosthesis in which much

of the weight is taken on the patella tendon. Usually uses a sleeve or cuff strap for suspension.

Supracondylar prosthesis — Similar to PTB but comes in around the femoral condyles to hold it on.

Sleeve suspension — A sleeve that is rolled over a below the knee prosthesis and onto the thigh.

Vacuum / suction suspension — a soft liner which is used in the socket with a valve allowing a vacuum type seal once the limb is donned.

Problems following amputation

Neuroma — A collection of nerve tissue, which forms a bundle at the end of a severed nerve.

Phantom pain — The feeling of pain/discomfort in the absent limb following an amputation.

Phantom sensation — Sensory awareness of the part of an amputated limb that is no longer present – a non-painful sensation.

Pistoning — The movement of the socket relative to the residual limb due to poor fit or lack of adequate suspension.



More Information

Please note that BACPAR disclaims any responsibility or liability for the content of any linked websites or Organisations.

Organisations related to Amputee Rehabilitation

British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association (BLESMA) - www.blesma.org

The Disabled Living Foundation - www.dlf.org.uk

British Amputee and Les Autres Sports Association (BALASA)

E-mail: balasaoffice@aol.com

Tel: 01773 715 984.

Finding Your Feet Charity - <http://findingyourfeet.net/>

REACH - www.reach.org.uk

Pearl Assurance House

Brook Street

Tavistock, Devon

PL19 0BN

Tel: 0845 1306 225

Steps - www.steps-charity.org.uk

The White House

Greenall's Avenue

Warrington

WA4 6HL

Tel (helpline): 01925 750271



Websites:

Special Interest Group Amputee Management (SIGAM)
on British Society of Rehabilitation Medicine (BSRM) [website](#)

www.csp.org.uk - This site is the home page of the CSP

The iCSP amputee rehabilitation network is available to all CSP and BACPAR members

<https://www.bacpar.org/resources/sparg-resources>- Scottish Physiotherapy Amputation Research Group (SPARG)

www.ispo.org.uk - The International Society of Prosthetics and Orthotics, United Kingdom

www.bapo.com - The British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists

www.vascularsociety.org.uk - The Vascular Society

www.limbless-association.org - The Limbless Association

www.limbformation.com - A resource to support children and families living with a limb difference.

Steelbones.co.uk - A charity for connecting amputees and their families with other amputees to support each other.

www.limbpower.com - A charity who aim to offer relief to the physically disabled by aiding rehabilitation and improving the quality of life through the medium of recreational and competitive sports and arts

www.limbcare.org - A Charity which aims to supply information that is free and available to anyone who wishes to learn more about life as an amputee and the opportunities available to the limb impaired.