

## **Above-Knee Amputation Management**

**Care, Compression, and the Path to Prosthetic Mobility**

Above-knee amputation, also known as transfemoral amputation, refers to surgical limb removal above the knee joint. This level of limb loss requires specialized rehabilitation and a prosthetic system that includes both a socket and prosthetic knee.

With proper above-knee amputation management, many individuals regain mobility, independence, and confidence. Long-term outcomes are strongly influenced by early residual limb care, prevention of complications, and ongoing collaboration with an experienced prosthetic care team such as Ottobock Care.



## Quick Answers: Above-Knee Amputation Care

- **What is above-knee amputation management?**

It is the lifelong process of caring for the residual limb, joint health, and prosthetic fit after transfemoral amputation to support mobility and prevent complications.

- **Why is compression important after above-knee amputation?**

Compression reduces swelling, supports circulation, shapes the limb for prosthetic fitting, and lowers the risk of skin problems.

- **Who should manage prosthetic care after above-knee amputation?**

Care should be managed by a licensed prosthetist, such as an Ottobock Care prosthetist, in coordination with physicians and physical therapists.

## What Is Above-Knee Amputation Management?

Above-knee amputation management includes the clinical care, rehabilitation strategies, and daily self-care practices required to prepare and maintain the residual limb for prosthetic use. It begins immediately after surgery and continues throughout life.

Effective management helps:

- Control residual limb swelling
- Shape the limb for proper prosthetic socket fit
- Maintain healthy skin
- Prevent infection and hip contractures
- Improve comfort and walking efficiency with an above-knee prosthesis

At Ottobock Care, prosthetists work as part of a coordinated clinical team to guide patients through each phase of transfemoral prosthetic rehabilitation.

## Compression Wrapping After Above-Knee Amputation

Compression wrapping is a cornerstone of early recovery after above-knee amputation. It helps manage edema, improves circulation, supports wound healing, and prepares the limb for prosthetic fitting.

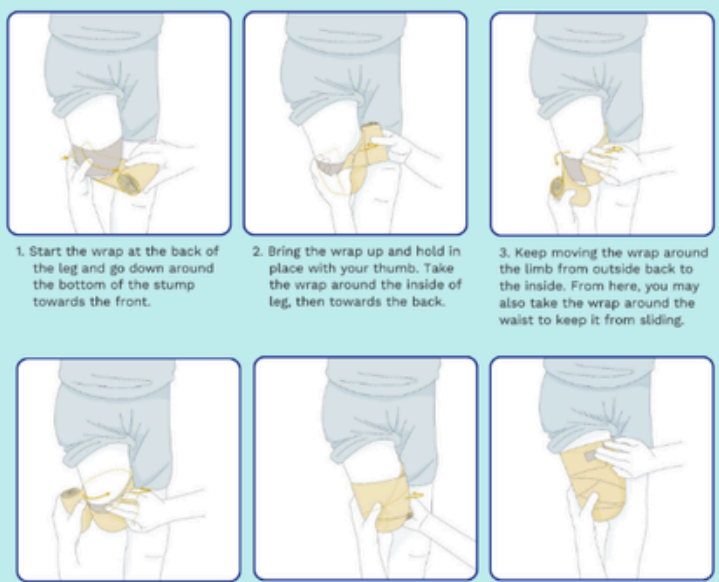
Most above-knee amputees use a figure-8 compression wrap applied with a 4- or 6-inch elastic bandage. Proper technique should be demonstrated and monitored by an Ottobock Care prosthetist.

**Key Principles: Figure-8 Wrapping**


- Greater pressure at the distal end, decreasing proximally
- Snug but not restrictive (two-finger rule)
- Never wrap in full circular passes
- Rewrap every 4–6 hours
- Compression worn up to 20–23 hours per day

Persistent redness, pain, or discomfort should be reviewed by your Ottobock Care prosthetic team.

**Above the knee  
Figure 8  
wrapping**



1. Start the wrap at the back of the leg and go down around the bottom of the stump towards the front.
2. Bring the wrap up and hold in place with your thumb. Take the wrap around the inside of leg, then towards the back.
3. Keep moving the wrap around the limb from outside back to the inside. From here, you may also take the wrap around the waist to keep it from sliding.
4. Take the wrap around the back of limb then across the front moving a little higher than the previous wrap.
5. Keep repeating steps 3-4 until the leg is covered. Remember to apply less pressure with wrap as you move up the leg.
6. Anchor the end of the wrap with tape or Velcro. Avoid using safety pins or clips to reduce injury to skin.

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## **Preventing Hip Flexion Contracture After Above-Knee Amputation**

Hip flexion contracture is a common complication after above-knee amputation. It limits the ability to fully extend the hip and can seriously interfere with prosthetic walking.

Prevention begins immediately after surgery.

### **Positioning Guidelines**

- Avoid resting the residual limb on pillows
- Do not sleep with a pillow between the legs
- Lie flat when resting whenever possible
- Limit prolonged sitting

Daily stretching prescribed by physical therapy is essential. Your Ottobock Care prosthetist will also monitor how hip range of motion affects prosthetic alignment and gait.

## **Residual Limb and Skin Care for Above-Knee Amputees**

The residual limb is enclosed in a prosthetic socket for many hours each day.

Consistent skin care reduces irritation, breakdown, and infection risk.

### **Skin Care Best Practices**

- Wash daily using mild, fragrance-free soap
- Dry completely before prosthetic use
- Inspect the limb at least twice daily
- Monitor high-pressure areas after removing the prosthesis

Redness that resolves within 10–15 minutes is usually normal. Persistent redness or skin breakdown should be evaluated by an Ottobock Care prosthetist.



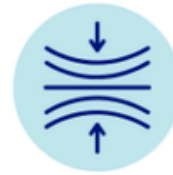
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### Signs of Infection After Amputation

Early detection of infection is critical.

#### Contact Your Physician If You Notice:

- Increasing redness, warmth, or swelling
- Abnormal discharge
- Red streaking from a wound
- Increased pain or fever

#### Seek Immediate Care If:

- The limb feels cold
- There is foul-smelling drainage
- Skin appears darkened or black

Your prosthesis may require temporary modification. An Ottobock Care prosthetist can coordinate care during healing.

## **Physical Activity, Weight Stability, and Long-Term Prosthetic Success**

Physical activity supports strength, endurance, and joint health after above-knee amputation. Weight stability is essential—small changes can significantly affect socket fit.

Ottobock Care prosthetists work with patients over time to adjust prosthetic fit as the body changes, supporting safe activity and long-term mobility.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How long after above-knee amputation can you get a prosthesis?**

Most people begin prosthetic fitting once healing is complete and swelling is controlled, typically several weeks after surgery.

### **Can above-knee amputees walk independently?**

Many achieve independent community ambulation with appropriate rehabilitation, prosthetic technology, and ongoing clinical support.

## **About Ottobock Care**

Ottobock Care is a global prosthetic and orthotic care provider delivering personalized services through board-certified and licensed clinicians specializing in prosthetic and orthotic clinical care, including above-knee prosthetic care.

## **Educational Disclaimer**

This content is for general educational purposes and does not replace individualized medical or prosthetic care. Always consult your physician or Ottobock Care prosthetist regarding treatment decisions.