The Road to Recovery



This post-operative guide is designed to support you during the important transition from surgery to recovery and, ultimately, to prosthetic use and getting back to your life.

From the very beginning of your recovery, **our mission is to advocate for you, educate you, and support you at every step.** We'll guide you through caring for your residual limb, teach strategies to prevent complications, and ensure you feel confident performing everyday tasks. We are here to listen, answer questions, and work closely with your entire care team, because your comfort, goals, and independence are always our priority.



To Families & Caregivers

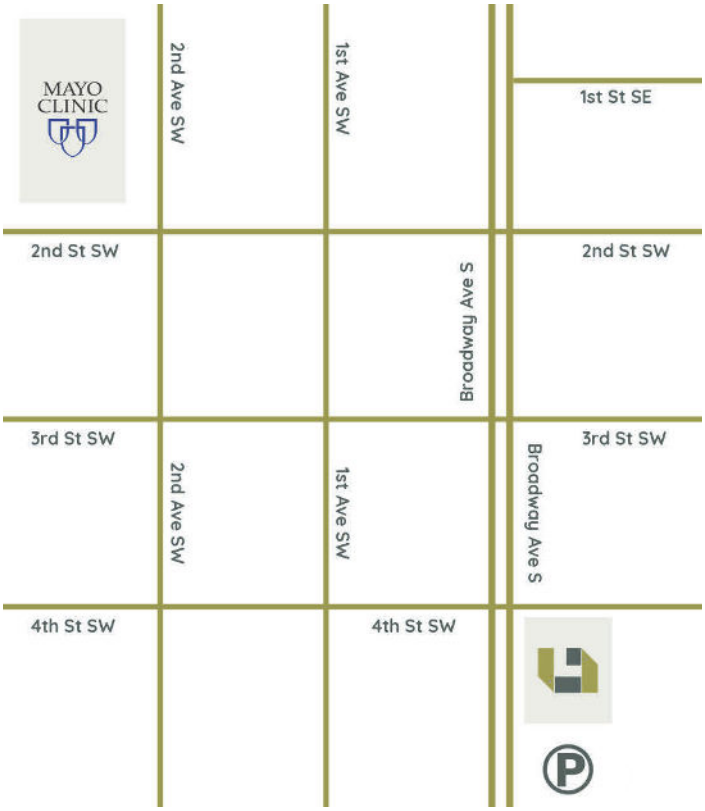
Your support plays a vital role in your loved one's recovery. Pain after surgery can vary greatly from person to person, and it may change over time. Encourage open communication about what they're feeling, and remind them it's okay to ask for help. Staying positive and attentive, while partnering with the care team, is the best way to help your loved one through the challenges and ultimately back to the activities that matter.

Who Is Limb Lab?

At Limb Lab, we help people regain comfort, mobility, and confidence through custom prosthetic and orthotic solutions tailored to their lifestyle, goals, and daily activities.

Our prosthetists listen first, design with purpose, and build relationships that last well beyond the first fit. **Our commitment is simple: help people move forward with confidence and live the life they want.**

Better outcomes happen when we work together. Limb Lab partners with physicians, therapists, and care teams to ensure care teams to ensure every person progresses clearly, with quick, effective adjustments to meet their goals.



Contact Us

400 Broadway Ave S STE 106
Rochester, MN 55904, USA
(507) 322-3457

ARIZONA
Glendale
Scottsdale

IOWA
Des Moines
Iowa City
Quad Cities

MINNESOTA
Mankato
Minneapolis
Rochester

NEBRASKA
Lincoln
Omaha

SOUTH DAKOTA
Sioux Falls

WISCONSIN
La Crosse



What to Expect Post-Operation

The time right after surgery is focused on healing and building a strong foundation for your recovery. Our goals during this stage include immobilization, promotion of healing, limb protection and shaping, and preparing you, physically and emotionally, for the next steps toward prosthetic fitting and independence.

Post-Operation Dressing



After surgery, your residual limb will be carefully dressed to protect it, manage swelling, and maintain joint movement. Your dressing is based on your surgeon's preference. Dressings include rigid plaster cast, rigid removal dressing, soft dressing, and compression.

Post-Operation Positioning

Achieving the best possible fit for your future prosthesis starts with maintaining maximum range of motion in your residual limb. amputation. Improper positioning after contractures.

To prevent contractures:

- Elevate your residual limb with your joints fully extended while sitting.
- If you sleep on your back, try to keep your legs stretched out and flat.

Things to avoid:

- Sitting with your knee or hip bent.
- Propping items, such as a pillow, under your hip or knee for extended periods of time.
- Placing pressure in the end of your residual limb.

Contracture → the permanent tightening or shortening of muscles, tendons, or joint tissues that limits movement and can complicate prosthetic fitting.

Post-Operation Shaping

The swelling of your limb, called edema, is excess fluid due to surgery. Reducing the swelling with the use of a **shrinker sock** will promote better healing, decrease pain, and will shape the residual limb so it may be fit with a prosthesis sooner.

Progression of Recovery

1. Amputation
Right after your amputation, it's normal to experience swelling and some pain around the surgical site as your body begins to heal.

2. Healing
Healing focuses on protecting your limb, controlling swelling, maintaining strength and mobility, and preparing your body for a comfortable prosthetic fit.

3.Consultation/Evaluation
During the evaluation phase, we work with you and your provider to set personal goals, explore prosthetic options, and create a care plan tailored to your needs and lifestyle.

4. Casting
The casting process is the first step in creating your custom prosthesis. We'll take an exact mold of your residual limb to capture your unique shape and contours. This ensures your socket, the most critical part of the prosthesis, fits comfortably and securely.

5. Diagnostic Fittings
A diagnostic fitting uses a prototype prosthesis to check comfort, alignment, and function before finalizing your design.

6. Preparatory/Temporary Prosthetic Device
With your temporary prosthesis, you'll begin walking practice and functional exercises to build strength, confidence, and independence.

7. Definitive Prosthesis
Your finished prosthesis is custom-built to be lightweight, strong, and beautifully crafted for the perfect fit, though socket adjustments may be needed over time.

8. Doing What Matters
Returning to activities and independence.



Managing Pain

Every amputee experiences pain differently. That's why it's important to stay open to all pain management options, communicate honestly about what you're feeling, and never hesitate to ask for help.

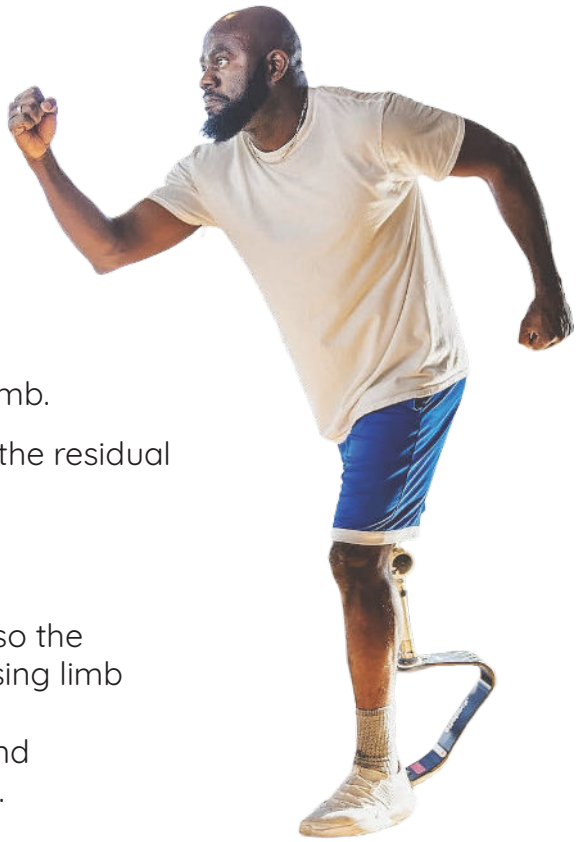
Types of Pain

Residual Limb Pain: Normal after surgery or injury, lessening as you heal.

Phantom Limb Pain: Felt in the amputated limb, affecting about 75% of amputees, and ranging from aching to burning or shooting sensations.

Phantom Limb Sensations: A painless feeling in the missing limb, such as tingling, itching, or movement; completely normal and felt by over 90% of amputees.

How to Manage Your Pain



Pain Medication

- Ranges from over the counter to prescription drugs.
- The most common type of pain management.

Massage/Desensitization

- Touching, tapping, and rubbing on the end of your limb.

Tip: Start with gentle, circular motions on and around the residual limb. Introduce different textures, as tolerated.

Mirror Imaging

- Place a mirror vertically between your legs or arms so the reflection of your intact limb appears where the missing limb would be.
- Watch the reflection as you move your intact limb and imagine moving the missing one to help reduce pain.

***Everyone perceives pain differently. Be open to various methods of pain management**

Physical Therapy

It's normal to experience fatigue, weakness, and stiffness after an amputation. The best way to overcome these challenges is to get moving as soon as it's safe. Physical therapy plays a key role in this process, your doctor may prescribe sessions to keep you motivated, guide your rehab, and ensure proper technique.

Gait Training

Gait training after an amputation helps restore safe, efficient, and natural movement patterns when walking with a prosthesis.

In gait training and physical therapy you will experience:

- Increased strength
- Increased range of motion
- **Static:** Weight shift and distribution, balance, stability, accepting load through pressure tolerant areas
- **Dynamic:** Step length, symmetry



Support Groups

Limb Strong → Community-driven initiative by Limb Lab dedicated to educating, connecting, and empowering individuals with limb loss through inclusive social events, engaging support networks, and shared experiences.
www.LimbLab.com/Limb-Strong

Wiggle Your Toes → Dedicated to helping amputees regain independence and thrive by providing resources, education, and community support.
www.WiggleYourToes.org

Amputee Coalition of America → National resource for education, information, and support for people affected by limb loss.
www.AmputeeCoalition.org