



## SHRINKERS

After the amputation surgery, the doctor might recommend the patient to wear a sock-like bandage called a shrinker. A shrinker is an integral part to the post amputation process. Early wrapping of the residual limb can have a number of positive effects:

- Decrease edema and prevent venous stasis by ensuring a proper distal-to-proximal pressure
- Gradient
- Assist in shaping
- Provide skin protection
- Reduce redundant-tissue problems
- Reduce phantom limb discomfort/sensation
- Desensitize the residual limb with local pain

Controversy does exist concerning the use of traditional elastic bandaging vs. the use of residual-limb shrinkers. Currently, many institutions prefer commercial shrinkers for their ease and reproducibility of donning.

### **When is the proper time to fit a shrinker?**

Shrinkers are generally provided by the prosthetist and fit 1 to 3 days after the stitches are removed. Patients should wear shrinkers at all times until the initial prosthesis is fit. Shrinkers can be worn while the prosthesis is not on. Some patients choose to wear shrinkers at night throughout the rest of their lives, stating that it helps reduce phantom pain and sensations. It can also help with maintaining their volume to ensuring that the prosthesis will fit in the morning.

**DO NOT** place a shrinker on the patient

- If the patient still has staples or stitches on the suture
- If the patient has an open wound or abrasion

This bandage is designed to fit over the patients' amputation stump like a sock would fit over their foot. Stretch out the shrinker to encompass the distal end of the residual limb. Pull the shrinker up onto the limb, making sure not to have any wrinkles. A transtibial shrinker should be pulled up proximal to the knee. A transfemoral shrinker should be pulled up into the perineum and proximal to the greater trochanter. When wearing a shrinker, you must make sure to keep the top of the fabric from rolling, as this can decrease the blood circulation to your stump. Consult your doctor or prosthetist immediately if the shrinker begins to feel too loose or too tight. Patients may need to be provided with new shrinkers as their limb takes shape, make sure to monitor the fit daily.

**If you have any questions or concerns about your shrinkers, please contact your Prosthetist.**

