



Going home following a stay in hospital is exciting, but you need to think about what needs to be done to make your home as safe and easy as possible to get around.

This Fact Sheet looks at what you should consider prior to going home and the things that you will need to help you to access, live and function independently at home.

### **What is an assistive device?**

An assistive device is the name given to equipment which aids your ability to do things, such as wheelchairs, walking aids and shower chairs.

### **What is a structural modification?**

Structural modifications refers to parts of your home which require changes – such as changes to doors and walls in your home and/or the addition of rails or ramps.

Building standards need to be met when such home modifications are made so it is important you seek the correct assistance when having home modifications made. In general, if you require an assistive device or structural modification to your home, you should ask for help from your Occupational Therapist to make sure that you receive devices that suit your needs. It is important to discuss funding options and costs for these items.



## What to consider after a lower limb amputation?

### **General home considerations:**

- Consider using assistive devices to help you pick things that are on the floor, placed up high or items that are difficult to reach.
- If you have stairs, both inside and outside of the house, you may need alternative access. You may need to consider having a ramp or stair lift put in your home.
- There are lots of places where a hand rail on the wall can be added to make things safer for you – especially in the bathroom and near any stairs.
- Remove mats and rugs from floors as the edge of these are a trip hazard.
- Move furniture around so that you have clear and straight spaces to get around in your home.
- Examine whether you are able to sit and get up from your chair/s. If you have difficulty chair/s may need replacing, have arms added or they may need to be adjusted so they are made a little higher.
- If you are using a wheelchair, ensure that your wheelchair can fit through the doorways. If your wheelchair can't get through, doorways may need to be widened.
- Check whether your wheelchair easily turns around in your home. Perhaps it's best to hang doors the opposite way to make it easier for you to get in and out of certain spaces.
- You may need to consider whether lighting needs to be added or switches moved to make it easier and safer for you when it's dark.

### **Kitchen considerations:**

- Consider the height of benches in your kitchen, and whether you can reach them, particularly if you are using a wheelchair.
- If you use a walking aid, consider whether you can carry something with two hands to get it safely from one part of the kitchen to another (eg. carrying your dinner plate from the bench to the table to eat). If you can't do this safely, you may need a stable walker to assist with doing this activity.

### **Bathroom considerations:**

- The bathroom can be a high risk place because the floor can be wet and slippery which means it's easy to fall, slip and hurt yourself.
- Consider the amount of room you need to turn a wheelchair so that you can safely transfer from it to the toilet, bath or shower.
- Consider how you will sit or stand in the bath or shower to wash. Many people use a shower chair or bath board to sit on in order to be safe. A hand held shower head is also a good idea to make washing easy.
- Getting onto a shower chair can be hard if there is a lip on the ground for a shower screen. If that's the case, this lip can often be removed and a curtain installed to make it safer and easier for you.

### **Gardening considerations:**

#### **Remember that ladders are dangerous things and you should not climb one with a prosthesis!**

- Consider whether you can kneel down and safely get back up again when working in the garden. If you have trouble, perhaps you need something to sit on instead.
- You may want to consider re-designing your garden to make it easier for you.
- You may want to consider installing outdoor taps at a higher level to enable you to turn them on safely and easily.
- You may need to change the height of garden benches so that you can work at a suitable height.

**Remember, there are many products available that can help you to live independently. Seek advice from your healthcare provider if you need advice or support.**

**limbs4life**

For more information contact Limbs 4 Life  
**1300 78 2231** (toll free)  
Email [info@limbs4life.org.au](mailto:info@limbs4life.org.au)

[www.limbs4life.org.au](http://www.limbs4life.org.au)