



Becoming an amputee is a life changing experience. However, this experience does not have to mean the end, just a new beginning and a time to learn different ways of doing things.

This Fact Sheet looks at some of the things to think about after leaving hospital, adjusting to life back in your own community and some ideas that may make the adjustment easier for you.

How to get around and use transportation?

How you will get from place to place, either on your own or with carers, is an important part of regaining your independence.

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Cars and motorbikes:

Many amputees are able to return to driving after limb loss. Cars, motorbikes and even some trucks can be modified to enable you to safely drive again after your amputation (eg. hand controls can be installed or the accelerator pedal can be moved to the left-hand side). In some cases you may need to re-sit a licence test. Your Occupational Therapist can assist you with finding a company that can modify your car or prepare you for a driving test.

If you will not be driving yourself you should also think about getting in and out of other people's cars, how easy or hard this is for you, whether you need their help, whether a wheelchair will fit in the car or if you will need it for where you are going.

Taxis:

You may be eligible for a Taxi Concession Card. For more information contact the Taxi Directorate in your state or territory.

Parking:

Consider whether you might need a disabled parking permit to help you to park closer to building entries and exits. You are eligible for a disabled parking permit if you have a significant permanent ambulatory (walking) disability; a disability that is not likely to improve. Your Social Worker can assist you with this process and direct you to the government body that issues permits in your state or territory. You will need the application form signed by a Doctor.



Public Transport:

If you prefer to use public transport, consider how you will get on and off the mode you use. Are there steps or ramps to allow for easy access? Can you hold on to something if you need to stand up and/or if there is not a seat available? Which is the best form of transport to use if you are using a wheelchair? Visit the public transport authority in your state or territory to find out more and consider making your first visits on public transport with a friend or carer.

Aeroplanes:

When travelling on an aeroplane with your prosthesis consider:

- Whether you require assistance with your luggage and/or carry-on bag.
- If you are wearing a prosthesis you will automatically set off the security screening system, so be prepared to have a body scan/pat search. This search is always done in a sensitive manner and seating should be available if required.
- Whether you require assistance moving from the security area to the gate lounge.
- Whether you can comfortably and safely walk on and off the plane or whether you will need wheelchair assistance or someone to help. If you need a wheelchair you can

find more information through the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (www.casa.gov.au/standard-page/travel-tips-wheelchair-users) or contact your airline to ask for assistance.

- Whether you can walk up and down stairs on to the aircraft if an aerobridge is not available. If an aerobridge is not available the airline can assist you on to the aircraft via other means (such as a lift).
- Speaking to your Doctor and/or Prosthetist prior to flying for the first time. Some people like to remove their prostheses on a long flight, however you need to consider if your stump will swell. If it does you may find it difficult to get your prosthesis back on when you arrive at your destination. Consider leaving your liner on or getting a shrinker sock to prevent swelling.
- Always carry additional stump socks and/or a clean liner with you in your carry-on baggage, as well as any lotions or gels you may need.

Shopping:

It's a good idea to think about how you will do your shopping. Consider how you will get to and from the supermarket or shops. Also consider how you will get access to the places you need to go when shopping, and how you will get what you buy home.

- You may want to consider buying your supermarket shopping online and have it delivered to your home.
- Perhaps you can ask someone to come with you to help with the trolley and loading things in and out of the car. Often local councils will provide support services to assist you in this matter.
- If you can walk to your local shops, perhaps you could consider buying your own trolley with wheels so that you can store your shopping in the trolley.
- Consider using a back pack to carry things so your hands are free if you need to use a walking aid, balance yourself or if you have had an upper limb amputation.

What's stopping you?

Is there anything else you did before your amputation that is really hard now? Or is there anything that bothers you and stops you from doing what you want?

The things listed here are just some examples of tips and the great help out there. If there are other things you'd like to do, don't let your amputation stop you – consider what your goals and needs are and speak to people and organisations that can assist you.

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