

## BEFORE YOUR FIRST PATIENT

# WITH LIMB LOSS

### Use Quality Outcome Measures

It is important to select outcome measures that assess deficit areas. Outcome measures help with goal development and highlight patient progress. Choose an outcome measure that can be used to develop goals with the data collected.

### Acute Phase Of Healing

This is the timeframe from when the amputation surgery has occurred to wound closure with no infection. This phase is dependent on a patient's comorbidities and healing factors. Each patient will have their own timeline.

(Smurr et al., 2008)

### Things To Consider

- Set post-operative expectations
  - Educate the patient on what this new lifestyle looks like for them. This is essential to set the patient up for success.
  - Communicate how timelines can vary for each individual.
  - Give information on potential complications and risk factors.
  - Help the patient to avoid learned helplessness
  - Provide emotional support along the way.
  - Connect early on in the recovery process.
  - Keep an open line of communication with the patient.

(Bennett, 2016; Delea et al., 2015)

### Other Considerations

- Know the patient's weight-bearing status for the involved extremity.
- Positioning is crucial in preventing contractures.
  - Keep involved extremities in a neutral position.
- Occupational therapists have a distinct value in preparing patients for their new life after an amputation.

(Sjodahl et al., 2008)

### References

- Bennett, J. (2016). Limb loss: The unspoken psychological aspect. *Journal of Vascular Nursing: Official Publication of the Society for Peripheral Vascular Nursing*, 34(4), 128–130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvn.2016.06.001>
- Delea, S., Buckley, C., Hanrahan, A., McGreal, G., Desmond, D., & McHugh, S. (2015). Management of diabetic foot disease and amputation in the Irish health system: a qualitative study of patients' attitudes and experiences with health services. *BMC Health Services Research*, 15, 251. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-015-0926-9>
- Smurr, L. M., Gulick, K., Yancosek, K., & Ganz, O. (2008). Managing the upper extremity amputee: a protocol for success. *Journal of Hand Therapy*, 21(2), 160–176. <https://doi.org/10.1197/j.jht.2007.09.006>
- Sjodahl, C., Gard, G., & Jarnlo, G. (2008). Transfemoral amputees' experiences of the first meeting and subsequent interactions with hospital staff. *Disability & Rehabilitation*, 30(16), 1192–1203. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638280701521683>