Below-Knee Amputation: Positioning

Rehabilitation Home Program

After surgery, it is important to keep your joints mobile and prevent shortened muscles so you can move more easily. These positions will help you prevent loss of motion.

If you wear a shrinker or a rigid bandage, check that it fits well. It should not roll down or fall off. This can create skin problems.

If you have diabetes, blood vessel disease or a loss of feeling in your legs, you should also check the position of your full leg. You must protect both legs from harmful pressure.

☐ On your back (supine)

Lie on a firm surface. Keep your legs flat on the bed or floor. Do not put a pillow under any part of your limb.

If you have lost feeling in your full leg, place a small pillow under your lower leg. This reduces pressure on the heel, because it keeps it from resting against the bed or floor.

Keep the legs close together. Do not let the hip roll in or out.
On your stomach (prone)

Lie on a firm surface. Do not place pillows under your stomach. Your hips should be straight and flat on the bed or floor. Keep the legs fairly close together.

You may use a pillow. If you have neck problems, place a rolled towel under your forehead. This will keep your head straight, so you don’t strain your neck.

If you have lost feeling in your full leg, place a small pillow under your shin or lower leg. This reduces pressure on the toes, because it keeps them from resting against the bed or floor.

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Sitting

Sit on a firm surface. Sit up straight, so you carry your weight evenly on both hips.

In a wheelchair, use your knee board to keep the knee straight. Do not let your limb dangle, as this may cause swelling and shortened muscles.

Try to spend as much time lying on your stomach as you do sitting. Do not cross your knees.
☐ **Four points (on hands and knees)**

Do not try this until your therapist shows you how.

This position will help you get up and down from the floor. Put even weight on your arms and legs. Hold your belly muscles tight to keep your back straight.

☐ **Kneeling**

Kneeling allows you to bear weight and keep your hips stable. This helps prepare your body for your prosthesis (artificial leg). Kneeling also helps you get up and down from the floor.

Keep your hips straight and your back upright. We will help you to find a proper surface for kneeling. If you have ever had knee surgery, we may ask you to avoid this position.
☐ **Standing and walking**

Stand up tall. Keep your shoulders back and your pelvis tucked beneath you.

Keep your limb pointed toward the floor. It should stay close to your full leg.

If you wear a bandage, keep it on while walking.

- **If you are using crutches:** Do not rest your limb on the handles.

- **If you are using a walker:** Do not rest your limb on the bars of the walker.