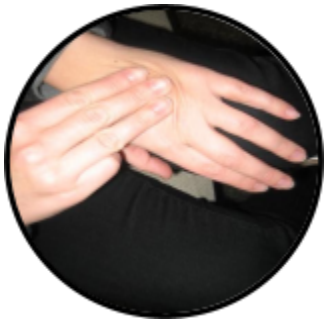
Preparing Your Residual Limb for Prosthetic Training

Benefit

Early touching of your residual limb will help you develop a tolerance in your residual limb to both touch and pressure. This will prepare your limb for when it is time to start wearing your prosthetic. These techniques may also help with decreasing your sensation of phantom limb pain.

Massage



Wait until your scar has fully healed, then initially be cautious when applying pressure over your suture area. Using one or two hands, massage your residual limb using a soft gentle kneading motion. Ensure that you are massaging the entire residual limb. After your sutures have been removed you can increase pressure to massage deeper soft tissues and muscles in your residual limb. Perform this 3-5 times per day for 5 minutes. This may be performed more often if it assists with reducing your phantom limb pain.

Tapping





Tap your residual limb with your fingertips, being careful not to tap with your fingernails. Initially be cautious over the suture area. After your sutures are removed, you can increase to a thumping motion using one or two hands. This technique should be performed 3-5 times per day for 1-2 minutes. This may be performed more often if it assists with reducing your phantom limb pain.

Desensitization



Tissue Paper



Terry Cloth

This technique is done directly on the skin. You will start by gently rubbing the skin of your residual limb using a circular motion. Initially you start by using a soft textured material (cotton ball) and then progress to rougher material (paper towel then a terry cloth). This technique will be completed until you are able to tolerate gentle friction from the terry cloth texture. Perform 2 times per day for 2-3 minutes.

Tissue/Scar Mobilization



This technique is performed directly to the skin and scar tissue to keep the skin on our residual limb loose. Scar adherence to underlying tissue can be a source of pain when using your prosthesis and can also cause blistering. Place two fingers over a bony portion of your residual limb. Press firmly and keep your fingertips in the same place on the skin, move your fingers in a circular fashion across the bone for about 1 minute. Continue this process on all the skin and underlying tissue around the bone of your residual limb. Once your incision is healed, use this procedure over your scar moving your fingers in a circular fashion to loosen the scar tissue directly.