

# A STEP AHEAD

SUMMER EDITION



Encouraging Ability and Success

**Amputees & Families**  
Support Group Qld Inc.

# CENTRAL OFFICE

Logan Central Community Centre  
9-11 Jacaranda Avenue, Logan Central Qld 4114  
PO Box 31, Kingston Qld 4114



Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 2.30 pm

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E: [admin@afsg.org.au](mailto:admin@afsg.org.au) or [lynda@afsg.org.au](mailto:lynda@afsg.org.au)



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We would like to thank InHouse Print & Design for the printing of our quarterly newsletter. Please contact them for all your printing requirements.

**Disclaimer:** Amputees & Family Support Group Queensland Inc (Amputees Queensland) does not provide specific medical advice or endorse any specific treatment, technology, company or device. Consumers are advised to consult with their healthcare professionals.

## FROM THE OFFICE

Welcome to the Summer Edition of A Step Ahead!!

As we go into Summer and head into the Christmas season we can reflect on what a year it has been! I don't think anyone could have predicted what 2020 would look like!

We began 2020 with a calendar full of events and activities which ended up being cancelled due to COVID-19, this includes our Christmas party which has been a tradition since the organisation started in 1986. It is as disappointing for us as it is for you!!



The restrictions are lifting and we are getting back to a semblance of the new "normal" and in line with this we look forward to a jam packed year full of events and information workshops. This includes the celebration of our 35th anniversary.

As we start planning for 2021 we would love for you to think about events, ideas or even information sessions you would like held. If you have any ideas please contact me directly to discuss, we love the feedback from our members.

We are looking at holding some of our information and workshop sessions online to ensure that everybody can attend in person or online. By having the option of online we can also be prepared if we have government directives due to COVID-19.

All of functions and events will be advertised on the website, Facebook and in the next issue of A Step Ahead.

We are also looking forward to starting 2021 with the launch of our brand new website! The new website will be more informative with downloadable resources for new and existing amputees. We would like to thank Queensland Health for the grant to assist with this upgrade.

The grant from Queensland Health has also assisted with the purchase of new computers and software for the office.

Finally I would like to thank everybody for their support and help in raising awareness during Amputee Awareness Week. This was a great success thanks to our wonderful volunteers and supporters!!

The physical office will be closed from 18 December through to 17 January 2021 but all services will continue as normal other than public holidays.

Wishing you all a safe, happy and merry Christmas.

**Lynda Foulis** | State Coordinator

*The Amputees and Families Support Group Qld Inc is partially funded by Queensland Health.*

# PEER SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

## **ACACIA RIDGE**

Mary Woods  
0407 623 762

## **BIRKDALE**

Allan Churchward  
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## **BRAY PARK**

Kevin & Ann Holding  
0415 558 974

## **CAIRNS**

Bernie Wolland  
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## **CARINA**

Phil Taylor  
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## **GYMPIE**

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## **HERVEY BAY**

Paul Gaudron  
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## **INALA**

Joe Watts  
0411 427 752

## **KINGAROY**

Wayne Stenning  
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Kevin McIntosh  
07 5546 3843

## **LOGAN**

Darren Wyer  
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Debbie Murr  
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## **TANAH MERAH**

Gina Bird  
0414 915 540

## **TOOWOOMBA**

Annie Cathcart  
0401 556 215

## **YOUTH GROUP**

Josh Jones  
0499 773 788

"Any one of us could be affected by an unexpected life event or illness where peer support will be vital to our recovery and wellbeing"





# DATES FOR THE DIARY

## January 2021

18th Office re-opens

## February 2021

3rd Open House morning tea

17th Hawaiian BBQ

24th Bingo

## March 2021

3rd Open House morning tea (guest speaker)

24th Bingo

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## OFFICE CLOSURE

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas  
and a safe and happy New Year!

The physical office will be closed from Monday,  
21 December 2020 through to  
Monday, 18 January 2021 inclusive.

For any queries please call 07 3290 4293 and we will  
respond to you as soon as possible as the phones will  
be managed throughout this period.

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[www.alaprosthetics.com.au](http://www.alaprosthetics.com.au)

## Every Dollar Counts...What is Available!

Every magazine we will include information on concessions that are available for you to access further if they are required. <https://www.qld.gov.au/housing/buying-owning-home/maintenance-modifications/maintenance-assistance>

### Home Assist Secure

Home Assist Secure is a service for Queenslanders aged 60 years and over, or people of any age with a disability, who can't undertake or pay for critical home maintenance without assistance.

This service provides safety-related information, referrals and subsidised assistance.

Your local Home Assist Secure service can provide information about:

- home maintenance, repairs
- minor modifications
- safety and security upgrades
- other assistance that the Queensland Government provides.

Staff can also help you employ tradespeople to do repairs or modifications and help you to plan future work.

### Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for Home Assist Secure services, you must meet all these criteria:

- at least 60 years old or of any age with a disability, a Pensioner Concession Card holder
- unable to complete the work yourself because it requires technical expertise or is a risk to your health and safety
- unable to have the works completed through alternative assistance, such as through:
  - the [Commonwealth Home Support Program](#)
  - the [Department of Veterans' Affairs](#)
- family or friends.

### Subsidised assistance

If you're eligible, you may receive a financial contribution towards labour costs for minor home maintenance or modifications that both:

- relate to your health, safety or security
- need to be done so you can remain in your home.  
This assistance may include:
  - yard and outside maintenance
  - small repairs and maintenance
  - smoke alarm-related jobs, e.g. installation, battery changes, vents cleaning jobs, repairs and maintenance requiring a licensed tradesperson (e.g. an electrician).

### Contacts and feedback

If you have questions or concerns about a service, or to apply for assistance, contact: phone: 13 74 68.



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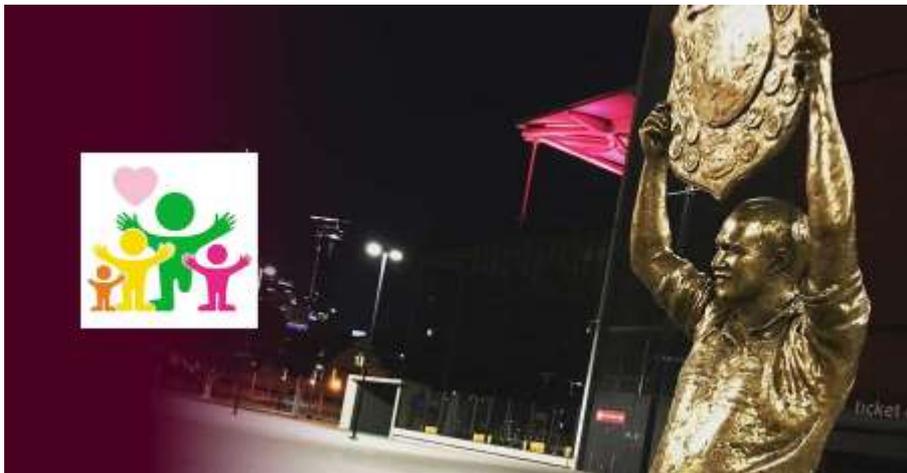
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Please visit [www.qprosthetics.com](http://www.qprosthetics.com)

# Amputee Awareness Week



Thank you to everybody who supported and helped raise awareness during amputee awareness week!



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**Wednesday, 17 February 2021**

11:30am to 2:30pm

**Roast Chicken, Pork & Ham | Salads |  
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\$10 per person

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by Monday, 8 February 2021.**

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# Bionic limbs: where are they?

Science fiction films and television programs such as the Six Million Dollar Man and Robocop have popularised the idea that severely injured people could be saved and even improved by advances in bionic and robotic technology. You may have seen news or internet articles of amputees with mind controlled limbs and wonder if they are available and how much they cost. You will also have seen high tech robots and wonder why the technology is not being applied to prosthetics.

Bionic prosthetic limbs are limbs that are directly controlled by the brain and nervous system.<sup>(1)</sup> This is a different realm of technology to 'smart' limbs that utilise microcomputers to mimic a human brain or detect muscle movements to control motors.

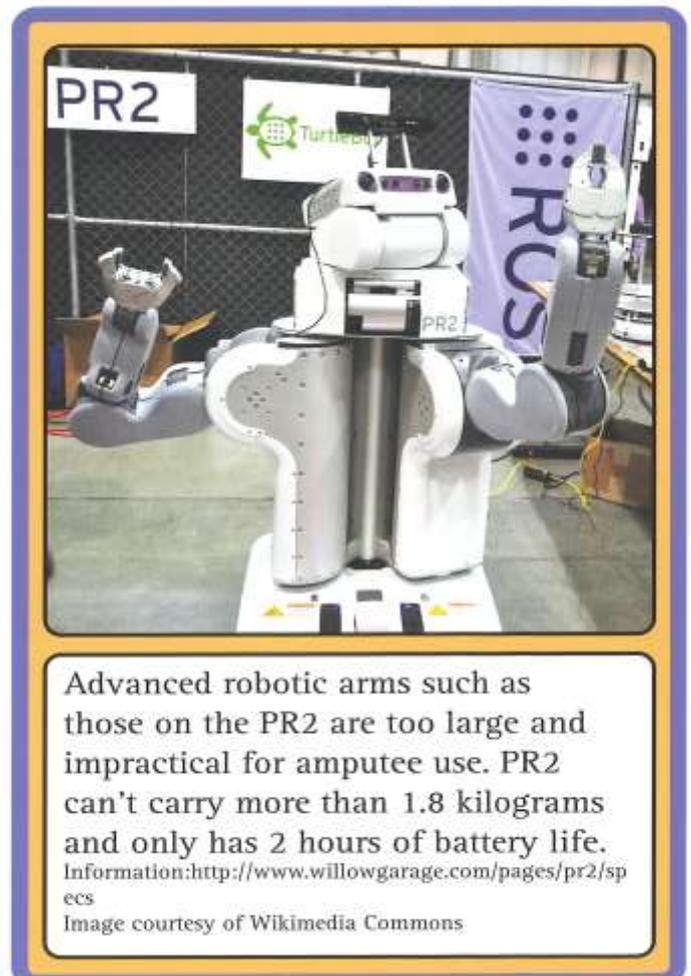
When this edition was compiled bionic limbs were still highly experimental with none on the open market. Research into bionic limbs is small scale compared to other areas of neuroscience due to the limited market for prosthetic limbs. Currently amputees have to be quite fit and active to benefit from a smart prosthetic limb, not to mention have a source of funding. As many amputees are in the third world the market for high tech prosthetics is small. Therefore prosthetics does not attract as much research funding and is a late adopter of technology from other areas of research such as robotics.<sup>(2)</sup>

There have been vast improvements in robotics and robotic technology but this does not translate into improvements in prosthetic design. There have been several major hurdles limiting the introduction of robotic components into prosthetic design: power, weight, noise and the limitations of neuroscience.<sup>(3,4)</sup>

Robot designers do not need to connect to a human nervous system as they can plug the robot into a computer. Robots can be as heavy and noisy as they need to be. A robot can be tethered to a power cable or kept stationary while a human would not tolerate the same inconvenience.<sup>(3)</sup>

A bionic prosthesis requires power to run the motors and microprocessors. It is only in recent time that batteries have been light weight enough for a human to wear. Robotic technology has not overcome this problem and the most advanced limbs require heavy use of power (a robotic hand can have more than 20 motors to run). The other issues are battery life and charging. Advanced robots still only have 1 to 2 hours of battery life. If this technology was applied to prosthetics the wearer may be without a limb for long periods while the batteries are being recharged.<sup>(3)</sup>

Not only are batteries heavy but a human forearm and hand has 27 bones and 30 muscles that form 18 articulated joints. To replicate these joints not only are batteries needed but also motors and the components to replicate bones and ligaments. While a human arm weighs approximately 10 kilograms; a stump can only tolerate about 3.5 kilograms of weight attached to it, therefore it is difficult to get a functioning bionic arm to be light enough to use.<sup>(3)</sup>



Advanced robotic hands have been designed but have to be tethered to processing units and batteries: one example had a processor the size of a filing cabinet. These motors create a level of noise that many amputees would find embarrassing as it draws attention to the prosthesis. <sup>(3)</sup>

Bionic prosthetics have hit a major hurdle in that the technology to build the prosthetic limb is far more advanced than the ability to connect to the brain. Current neuroscience does not have the techniques to connect bionic limbs to the brain in a way that replicates a natural nerve connection. <sup>(3,4)</sup>

The result of this imbalance is hi-tech prosthetic components that can perform with precision when connected to a computer but become slow and awkward when connected to a human brain.

Connecting humans and computers is of great interest to not only researchers of prosthetics but also researchers into other areas of neuroscience such as spinal injuries and degenerative diseases like motor neuron disease. The availability of human interfaced prosthetics that work with precision and fully replicate human movement is not predicted to be available on the market until at least the 2020s. <sup>(3,4)</sup>



ASIMO made by Honda has advanced 2 legged walking capability. It does not have the backpack for looks: this is where the 7 kilogram battery and computer processor are housed. Its current battery life is one hour. <sup>(5)</sup>

Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons



The American Military is a world leader in advanced prosthetics. The Modular Prosthetic Limb (MPL) pictured above is a prosthetic hand that is controlled by the human brain and replicates a large range of human movement. The silicone cover is exceptionally realistic. At this stage the MPL is experimental.

Information and image courtesy of:

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flickr\\_-\\_Official\\_U.S.\\_Navy\\_Imagery\\_-\\_The\\_Modular\\_Prosthetic\\_Limb\\_%28MPL%29.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flickr_-_Official_U.S._Navy_Imagery_-_The_Modular_Prosthetic_Limb_%28MPL%29.jpg)

## Smart limbs currently available

As batteries and computers have shrunk smart prosthetic limbs with computer powered 'intelligence' are becoming a reality. When this book was compiled in 2013 smart prosthetic limbs were not funded by government agencies.

Upper arm amputees have the choice of cable controlled arms or myoelectric. Myoelectric arms operate by detecting the nerve signals from flexing muscles. These signals then tell motors to activate and move parts of the prosthetic arm.<sup>(6)</sup>

Myoelectric arms do not need harnesses and cables so they are more comfortable than a traditional arm. The lack of cables allow a realistic silicone cover to be put on the limb and a greater range of motion. These limbs can also be used on children as young as one year of age. The main disadvantages to myoelectric arms are the cost, the need to be charged and the lack of water resistance. The training process is quite intense as the user needs to learn how to control and flex individual muscles. Not all arm amputees are suitable for a myoelectric arm as you need good nerve signals and stump muscles strong enough to flex.<sup>(6,7)</sup>

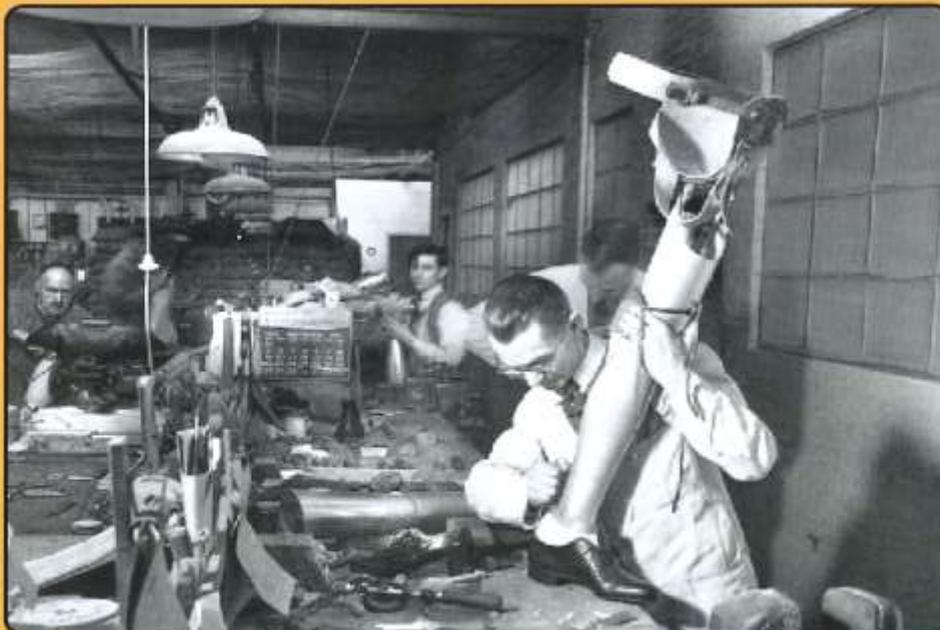
Smart arms and hands are available with a cost in excess of 100 thousand dollars for the most advanced designs. These arms are quite effective, but not yet capable of

replicating a full range of human movement and need to be calibrated to the user.<sup>(8)</sup>

Lower limb smart technology consists of microprocessor knees with an internal computer to control the knee's movement. The computer connects to sensors that detect how the user is walking and can adjust the knee's movement to suit changes in speed and terrain. Traditional mechanical knees can only move at one speed and are adjusted to the user's most common walking speed. This can be very limiting for active amputees.

Smart limbs are not suitable for all lower limb amputees. To start with there are no smart technologies for below knee amputations; only above knee amputees are suitable. Amputees only benefit if they are very active and have a variety of walking speeds, walk on uneven terrain and need to use steps daily. Those who walk slowly may find the increased speed exhausting. Like myoelectric arms, smart knees need to be charged and cannot get wet. Unlike myoelectric arms, smart knees are not suitable for children: users must be at least 150 centimetres tall to use one.<sup>(9)</sup>

The latest model smart knees cost over 80 thousand dollars while older models are relatively cheaper at 10 to 60 thousand dollars.<sup>(10)</sup>



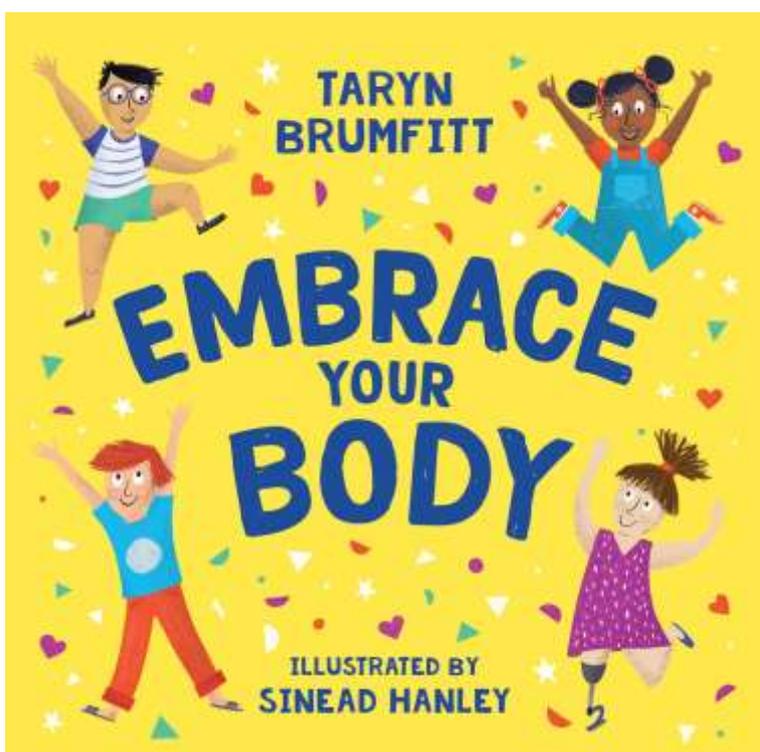
Advancement in prosthetic design has been slow, much to the frustration of amputees. This photo of a prosthetist at work is from 1941: the prosthetic limb he has made is very similar to one made today.

Image courtesy of the Imperial War Museum  
<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205198886>

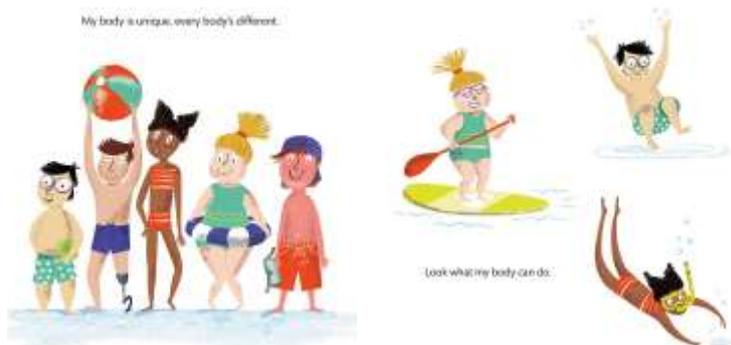
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This Article was taken from "Information for People Living with Amputation" by Queensland Health. If you would like a copy of this book please contact the Amputees & Families Support Group Queensland Inc on 07 3290 4293 or via email [admin@afsg.org.au](mailto:admin@afsg.org.au) and we will arrange for a copy to be sent to you.



Taryn Brumfitt founder of the Body Image Movement has written *Embrace Your Body* based on the iTunes #1 hit children's song "Embrace" by Pevan & Sarah and Taryn Brumfitt, this picture book is aimed at early learners (years 3-7) and encourages everyone to love who they are, inside and out.



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# The Importance of **WOUND CARE**

By Mike Zwolinski  
inMotion May | June 2020

Proper wound care is crucial because any wound is at risk of becoming infected from bacteria, germs, or dirt. If not treated properly and soon, infections can compromise the limb resulting in further surgery. Wound care is important for everyone – and especially important for those recovering from limb loss.

While you're in the hospital, caring for your wounds will be the responsibility of your healthcare team. This can be a valuable time to learn. You can have your nurses and physicians explain how they are caring for your wounds, why they are doing it certain ways, and what recommendations they have for you after your release.

After your surgery, your focus will be on caring for your wound while maintaining the residual limb. Your surgical site will need diligent care. Once it has healed, you will need to care for the health of your residual limb, especially if you decide to start using a prosthesis. If you use a prosthetic device, your residual limb will be

enclosed in a socket or liner, so it will be prone to skin irritation and infection.

As your wound heals and after, make sure that you carefully inspect your skin. Pay close attention to any changes. Notice any abnormalities, such as skin redness, swelling, or fever. Rashes may be the result of not keeping your limb and liner clean and dry. Bruising or swelling can be a sign of an ill-fitting socket that should be adjusted. Examine blisters without popping them. If a blister is cloudy, that could be a sign of infection.

The location of your wounds is important. If you develop a cut or scrape on the end of your residual limb or where you bear weight in the socket of your prosthesis, stay out of your prosthesis since this will allow it to heal more quickly.

The best way to treat a wound is to prevent a wound. Here are a few tips:

- Wash your residual limb with mild soap and water, then rinse and pat dry. Do that at least once a day, or more if you sweat a lot or are treating a rash or infection.
- Wash everything that comes in contact with your skin with soap and water. That includes socks and liners. They should be rinsed and thoroughly dried before using. Read the manufacturer's instructions and consult with your healthcare team for the best ways to care for your prosthetic device.
- Do not use alcohol-based lotions since they dry out your skin and can cause cracks, which can lead to infections.
- Use only enough lotion to avoid flaking, peeling, dry skin. Do not moisturize the amputated limb immediately before applying your prosthesis. The best time to apply lotion is at night before going to bed. It is important to make sure the skin doesn't become too dry or too moist.
- Maintain a good prosthetic fit. Learn how to adjust your sock ply or get your prosthetic adjusted if you develop pressure, pressures, or sores.
- Maintain correct alignment of your prosthesis by wearing the correct heel height and ensuring a good socket fit.
- If you have diabetes, monitor and maintain your blood sugar levels. Alert your healthcare team immediately if you begin to lose feeling in your arms, legs, or feet.

If you do develop a wound and your residual limb feels cold, smells bad, you experience swelling, your wound has a thick brown/gray discharge, or the skin around your wound turns dark or black, *seek emergency medical attention immediately.*

Caring for your wounds and residual limb is one of the best ways you can care for yourself.



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# CHRISTMAS GIVING



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# Join us for a monthly Catch Up



Feel like getting out of the house, relaxing and enjoying the company of others? Then come on down and visit us for our monthly catch ups in the Logan Central Community Centre!

On the first Wednesday of every month we have an open house! Come down, enjoy a free cuppa, morning tea and have a chat. Every alternate month we will have guest speakers.

**Dates:** Wednesday, 3 February  
Wednesday, 3 March (Guest Speaker)  
Wednesday, 7 April

**Where:** Amputees & Families Support Group Qld Inc  
Logan Central Community Centre  
9-11 Jacaranda Avenue  
Logan Central

**Time:** 10:00am - 12:00pm

**Cost:** FREE

**Everybody is welcome!**





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# GROCERY BINGO

**Grocery Prizes | Lucky Door Prize | Raffle  
Morning Tea | Onsite Parking**

**When:** Wednesday, 24 February 2021  
Wednesday, 24 March 2021 (Easter Bingo)  
Wednesday, 28 April 2021  
Wednesday, 26 May 2021

**Time:** 9.15am for 9:45am start

**Where:** Logan Central Community Centre  
(Amputees Qld hall)  
9-11 Jacaranda Avenue  
Logan Central

**RSVP is essential.** We have limited spots available for Grocery Bingo due to COVID-19 restrictions so it is **essential** that you RSVP to Lynda on 3290 4293 on the Friday before each Bingo session. **Sorry NO walk ins.**





## PROSTHETIC SOLUTIONS FOR AN ACTIVE AND INDEPENDENT LIFESTYLE

At oapl, we understand that having an amputation can be a traumatic and challenging experience.

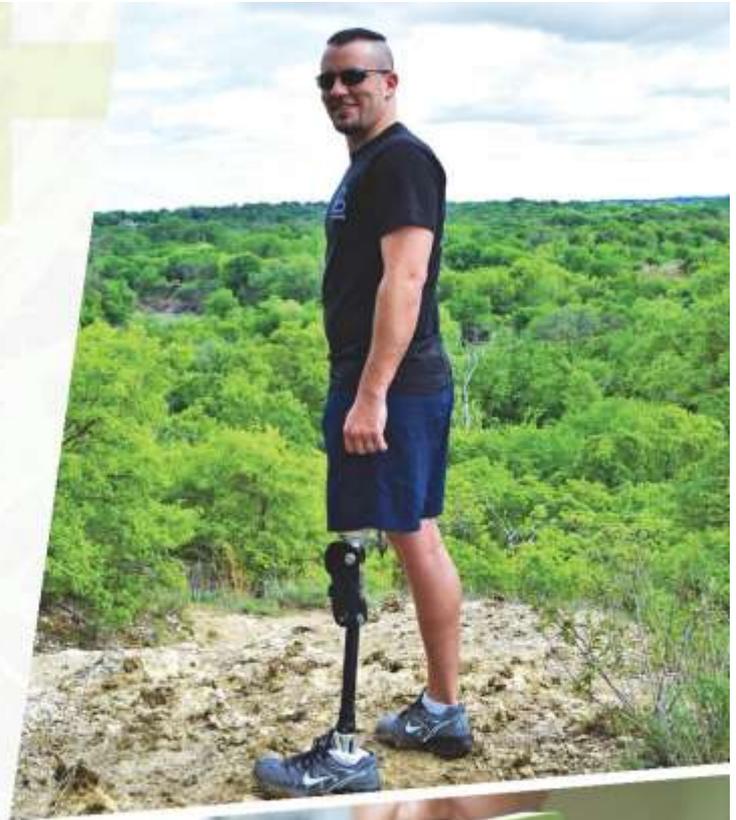
With over 30 years in the profession, patient care is our heritage and our inspiration. Seeing the real life difference we make in patient's lives for us, is what it's all about.

With an extensive number of prosthetic and orthotic professionals around Australia, you can rest assured that oapl clinical care is always within reach.

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### Need funding assistance?

We can help coordinate funding with a range of government bodies including Department of Veteran Affairs, NDIS, WorkCover and more.



For more information on our services and clinical locations, call us on **1300 866 275** or email us at [info@oapl.com.au](mailto:info@oapl.com.au)

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## Setting goals

Whether your goals are big or small, the first step to achieve them is to decide what they are. Start with the things you enjoy. We are happiest when we use our strengths. Identify any goals associated with your strengths.

## SMART goals

Once you've decided your goals, the SMART theory of goal setting might help you to achieve them. The theory is based on years of academic research and became popular in the 1980s. Below are the five criteria of SMART goals that should give you the best chance of success.

**Specific:** Be clear about what you are aiming for — your goals should include specifics such as 'who, where, when, why and what'. For example, rather than 'do more exercise', your goal could be to 'walk'.

**Measurable:** Set goals that you can measure. Your goals should include a quantity of 'how much' or 'how many': for example drinking 2 litres of water per day.

**Achievable:** Set goals that you are able to do. Setting a harder goal might lead to a better outcome, but only as long as you can achieve it. Goals that are too difficult can be discouraging and could lead to you giving up.

**Realistic:** Set goals that are practical for you and your circumstances. Walking an hour a day might be difficult if you don't get home from work until 8pm every day.

**Time-related:** Set a timeframe and have an endpoint. Deadlines can motivate your efforts and prioritise the task above other distractions.

## More tips for goal setting

### Support and feedback

Having support from others and making goals public can improve the chances of achieving goals by enhancing commitment to the goal. Receiving regular feedback is also important, as it allows you to know when you are moving in the right direction, and change tactics if necessary. This can be done by receiving feedback from others (such as a physio or occupational therapist) or by tracking measurable items.

## Breaking down goals

It is useful to break down large goals into smaller steps that can be achieved relatively quickly. This can lead to a sense of achievement and help to keep you focused, as well as prevent you from becoming overwhelmed by large goals. For example, if your long-term goal is to run, some smaller, more achievable steps may be to walk consistently for 15 minutes and increase it as you meet the goals.

When you've achieved a goal, take the time to enjoy the satisfaction of having done so. Absorb the implications of the goal achievement, and observe the progress that you've made towards other goals.

If the goal was a significant one, reward yourself appropriately. All of this helps you build the self-confidence you deserve.

# S.M.A.R.T. GOALS

## WORKSHEET

**S**pecific

*What exactly do I want to do?*

**M**easurable

*How will I track my progress?*

**A**ttainable

*Is this realistic for me? Do I have what I need to make it possible?*

**R**elevant

*Why am I doing this? Does it matter to me?*

**T**ime-oriented

*When will I have this completed?*



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# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM



Date: \_\_\_\_\_  New  Renewel

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Partner: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Limb/s amputated: \_\_\_\_\_

Cause of amputation: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies/ Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous / current occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

## Membership Contribution

Yearly membership - ( 1 July to 30 June )

\$15 Adult single       \$20 Families/ Pensioner Families       \$25 Organisations

I would like to make a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like someone to contact me about volunteering.

I have paid via direct deposit to Heritage Bank | BSB: 638070 | Account: 11471050.  
Please us first initial and surname in the reference field.

I have paid via pay pal at [www.afsg.org.au](http://www.afsg.org.au)

I enclose my Cheque / Money Order to the value of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
for membership and/or donation.

Signature.....Date:.....

Complete application and return with payment to:  
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PO Box 31, Kingston QLD 4114  
[admin@afsg.org.au](mailto:admin@afsg.org.au)

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