November|December 2013
Volume 23, Issue 6

inMotion

A magazine dedicated to
living well with limb loss

A Publication
of the amputee coalition™

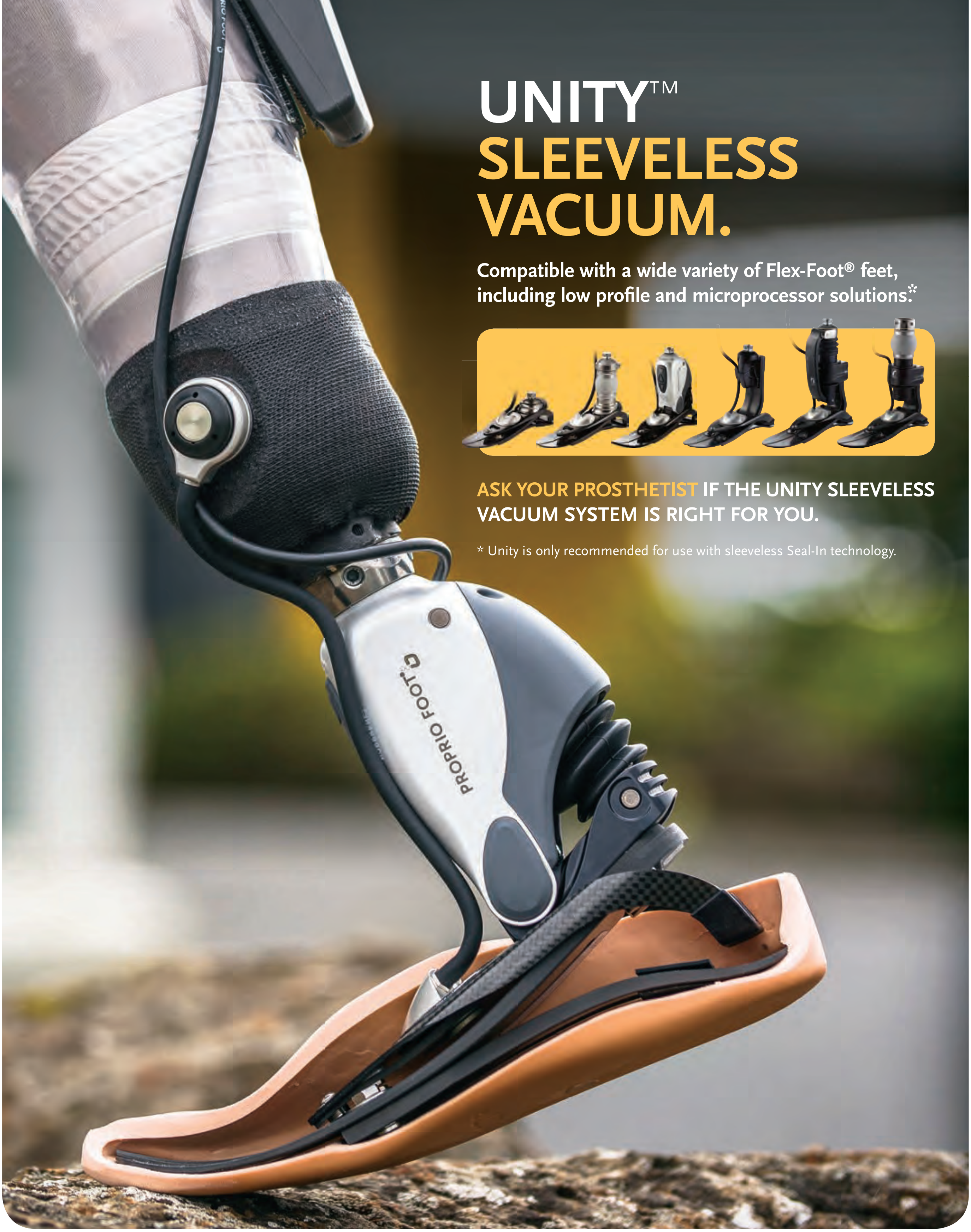
Holiday Cooking Without Hands

Clear the Way by Clearing the Air

Lessons of Life

Enjoying the Holidays

Gift Ideas for Amputees


PROPRIO FOOT

Enjoying the Holidays

There's No Time Like the Present

For many, particularly people living with a disability, "leisure" is a foreign concept. Leisure implies the ability to temporarily retreat from the everyday grind of work and obligations. The holidays offer such an opportunity, at least in theory – a time reserved to attend to family ties and friendships that can become neglected or even strained through life's daily struggles.

The holidays can be a lot of fun, but the potential for stress can be intimidating: decorating, cleaning, company rambling in and out of your home, maybe some travel, buying gifts, and some *serious* cooking and eating.

But, with a little planning, you should be able to lighten your load this holiday season. Doing what you can to make life easier, less stressful and more enjoyable is worth it to keep the focus on what's most important – spending time with family and friends.

When was the last time you said, "Thank you" to someone? Or told someone you love them? As quickly as a day passes, someone you care for can be there one day and gone the next. The most precious gift that we can give to one another is our love and friendship. And there's no time like the present to tell someone how you feel.

Considering that friends are one of the most important resources we have, we rarely acknowledge how thankful we are to have them around. We all have friends who have helped us in one way or another, from the friend who's always been there when you need someone to talk to, to the friend who's willing to fix a meal or drive you somewhere.

And of course, there's the most important group of all: our families. Family is almost always there when you need a helping hand, just as you're there for them. With the ever-increasing amount of people on the go and away from home, the holidays are just about the only time left for many families to get together. Let's make the most of it.

From all of us at the Amputee Coalition, we wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season. And we thank you.

Bill Dupes, Senior Editor

"Just as a puppy can be more of a challenge than a gift, so too can the holidays."

~ John Clayton (1709-1773), English clergyman

BE AN INFORMED READER

Editorial content (articles, news items, columns, editorials, etc.) in *inMotion* often contain healthcare information. As an informed reader, you should never make a decision about managing or treating your condition without consulting your own clinicians: They know you best.

Sometimes, in our interviews with people who are amputees, the person being interviewed will say something about his or her personal experience that may not be entirely consistent with standard practice. In these cases, we print what the person said because we think it gives readers insight into that individual's experience that we believe will resonate with others. But: We urge you to always check with your medical team before changing your own healthcare regimen.

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contents

November | December 2013

Enjoying the Holidays

sections

departments

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Cheryl Douglass

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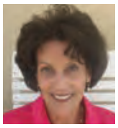

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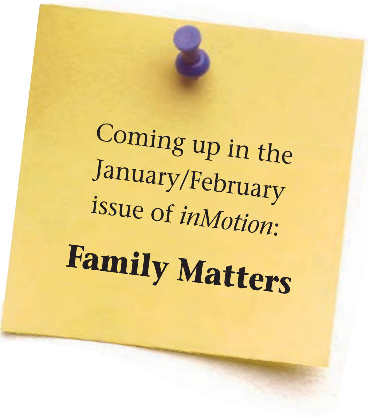
WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Email your letters to editor@amputee-coalition.org or
mail to Amputee Coalition, 900 E. Hill Ave., Ste. 290, Knoxville, TN 37915-2568



Coming up in the January/February issue of *inMotion*:

Family Matters

Our Mission To reach out to and empower people affected by limb loss to achieve their full potential through education, support and advocacy, and to promote limb loss prevention.

inMotion
A Publication of the Amputee Coalition

InMotion magazine publishes unbiased journalism that seeks to "empower and motivate" living well and thriving with limb loss. The magazine targets amputees and their families and is provided free electronically to all friends of the Amputee Coalition and in hard copy to all subscribers. Each issue covers health, well-being, exercise, life issues and advocacy for amputees and their families. Stories showcase amputees living and thriving with limb loss and profile Amputee Coalition programs and services.

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Quality for life

Update!

The Affordable Care Act

All people must have minimum essential coverage beginning January 1, 2014.

by Dan Ignaszewski

The Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) was passed in 2010, and was upheld by the Supreme Court in 2012. While several provisions have already been enacted, we are now entering the time when several of the law's key provisions go into effect – including the individual mandate to have health coverage. This article will help to provide guidance and information on what changes will be coming, and what it will mean to you as a member of the limb loss community.

> *This article will help provide guidance and information on what changes will be coming..*

The healthcare law requires that all people must have minimum essential coverage beginning January 1, 2014. People will have "minimum essential coverage" if they choose to select a government-sponsored plan, an employer-sponsored plan or an individual plan. In order to help provide more affordable options, people will be able to buy health insurance on or off a state insurance exchange or marketplace.

If you currently have insurance, you can keep it, but you may need to check to ensure it meets minimum requirements to avoid the tax penalty. If you have an employee-sponsored health plan, you will still be able to keep your plan (unless your company/organization elects to stop providing coverage, in which case you will be able to purchase in the marketplaces). If you currently have Medicare, your plan options will largely remain unchanged.

continued on page 10

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Update!

The Affordable Care Act

continued from page 8

>> What is a state exchange/marketplace?

The law required that insurance “exchanges” or insurance “marketplaces” be set up in each state for individuals to buy health insurance from private healthcare providers who will compete to cover them. Shoppers will be able to find the best deal for them and their family from eligible plans that participate in the marketplace within each state. These exchanges are estimated to provide up to 30 million people with affordable health insurance by 2019.

Tax penalty if you elect to not have insurance

2014	$95 per adult, $47.50 per child (up to $285 per family) or 1% of annual income, whichever is greater
2015	$325 per adult, $162.50 per child (up to $975 for a family) or 2% of annual income, whichever is greater
2016	$695 per adult, $347.50 per child (up to $2,085 for a family) or 2.5% of annual income, whichever is greater

The state marketplaces are different in each state. Before 2013, each state was given the task of building/designing their own plan that would follow the new regulations and provide selected categories of Essential Health Benefits (EHB) to beneficiaries. The District of Columbia and 16 states took this route and designed their own marketplace. Seven states elected to run their exchange in partnership with the federal government, and 27 states did not set up a marketplace and therefore defaulted to the Federal Marketplace.

Each state was given criteria and requirements by the law and the Department of Health and Human Services when setting up their plans, which they had to follow. The Amputee Coalition worked with states as well as partners and coalition members to stress the importance of including prosthetic and custom orthotic benefits in their EHBs. The reason this is important is that if a benefit is deemed an EHB, then that benefit would not be allowed to be subjected to caps.

Unfortunately, many states did not explicitly include prosthetic devices in their EHBs; however, nearly every state appears to have at least some level of coverage for prosthetic care. It is very important that if you’re interested in participating in your state’s insurance marketplace, or when evaluating any other insurance plan options, that you confirm the level of coverage for not only prosthetic care, but any other healthcare needs you may have.

Essentially, the health insurance marketplace is a new way for you to find health coverage options that fit your budget and meet your needs. Within the marketplace, you’ll be able to see all of your options and enroll in the plan that best suits you. Additionally, you may be eligible for discounts and tax credits that will help to cover the cost of your plan.

Enrollment for the health insurance marketplace began on October 1, 2013, so be sure to look at all available options today! If you have questions about the health insurance marketplaces, and would like to speak to someone about your options and to help you navigate your marketplace, you can contact the help center toll-free at 800/318-2596, TTY: 855/889-4325. You can also go online to Healthcare.gov and click on “Get Insurance” for coverage options in your state and to find out more about the marketplaces.

This is Shannon. With three little boys and a baby on the way, Shannon needs strong, dependable prosthetics to keep up with her active children. Shannon's practitioner chose the ORION Microprocessor Knee and the élan to do just that.

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From playing by the creek, maneuvering the monkey bars to blowing bubbles in the park, the ORION and élan allow Shannon to be there every step of the way.

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NOVEMBER

AMERICAN DIABETES MONTH
diabetes.org

DIABETIC EYE DISEASE MONTH
preventblindness.org

FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH
thefamilycaregiver.org

HEALTHY SKIN MONTH
aad.org

NOVEMBER 9
Össur Mobility Clinic
Presented by Challenged Athletes Foundation
San Francisco, California
ossur.com/mobilityclinics

NOVEMBER 11
Veterans Day
www1.va.gov/opa/vetsday

NOVEMBER 14
World Diabetes Day
worlddiabetesday.org

NOVEMBER 21
Great American Smokeout
cancer.org

NOVEMBER 17
Prematurity Awareness Day
marchofdimes.com

DECEMBER

SAFE TOYS AND GIFTS MONTH
preventblindness.org

DECEMBER 3
Össur Leg Amputee Run Clinic
Boston, MA
mark@challengedathletes.org

Note: Dates listed for events are subject to change. Check Amputee Coalition online calendar and listed Web sites for current information.

Clear the Way by Clearing the Air

by Debra Kerper

Now what am I going to do? Aunt Lois just called, inviting me for the Thanksgiving holiday and insisting that I stay with them. She has plenty of room and we love waking up early on Thanksgiving morning to start cooking. It's been three years since I've shared my favorite holiday with Aunt Lois and her family and I'm so excited. However, as soon as I hang up the phone my excitement waivers as reality sets in and doubt starts coursing through my veins.

I'm a recent amputee and thoughts are racing in my head. Can I manage the stairs? Is the toilet seat too low? What about the cement steps leading to the front door? I don't recall a banister to hold onto. But I *do* remember how much Aunt Lois loves her scatter rugs. Those decorative lengths of fabric now represent fear as I imagine myself tripping over one and ending up on the floor.

And, if those worries aren't enough, here's the big one: How am I going to take a shower? How will I step over the bathtub without a grab bar? There's no way I can take a shower without a seat. Is the bathroom door wide enough to get through it in my wheelchair or with my walker?

Don't be afraid to ask for assistance; most people are very eager to help!

HAVE YOU HAD A SIMILAR SITUATION? If so, the following suggestions and possible solutions may help reduce your anxiety when you are invited to stay with family and friends, during the upcoming holidays or anytime.

1. **Don’t be afraid to speak to your relatives and friends** openly about your concerns – you might be surprised at the solutions they may come up with. After all, you received the invitation because they care about you and want you to visit. Perhaps they will offer you a room on the first floor or their master bath, which has a more accessible stall shower.

2. **Ask if they can pick up a shower chair** for you at the local pharmacy or hardware store. These have become common items. The same goes for a toilet seat riser if that will make your stay more comfortable.

3. **Sit down and make a list of everything you’ll need to bring with you**, from extra liners and socks to alcohol and skin creams and any tools for minor repairs.

4. **Bring a folding wheelchair with you for shopping trips or sightseeing.** If you don’t have one, think about renting one at your destination so you don’t get overly tired out. The same goes for navigating the airport. Airports are extremely busy at holiday times, so take advantage of the help available and use wheelchair assistance to get through security lines and to your gate when you need to make connections.

5. **Be sure to request preferential seating on airplanes** so that you can be as comfortable as possible. Call ahead after you have your reservations in order to accomplish this.

6. **If you have any worries about the TSA security process, visit their Web site at tsa.gov/specialneeds** for complete information regarding traveling with prosthetics. You should never be asked to remove your shoes or your prosthetic devices. You’ll need to be scanned and you are entitled to a private screening. TSA has a traveler’s hotline number, TSA CARES (855/787-2227), which you can call for more information regarding your specific questions and concerns.

Most importantly, pack a smile and a good attitude! Enjoy your family and friends and have a wonderful holiday. Don’t be afraid to ask for assistance; most people are very eager to help!

Lessons of Life

by Wonseok "Eddie" Lee

Wonseok "Eddie" Lee is currently serving as an intern at Amputee Coalition.

I was awakened to the fact that people with disabilities can live fulfilling lives if they foster positivity and confidence.

I have come a long way in coping with my amputation since I lost my hand in an accident involving farm equipment at the age of 5. I was born and raised in a peaceful small town in South Korea, surrounded by the warm-hearted love of my neighbors. In my town, my disability was seen as a minor physical difference. Unfortunately, in South Korean society, people with disabilities are often perceived as having suffered great misfortune.

When I was sent to school at the age of 14 to Pusan, the second-largest city in South Korea, I began to feel self-conscious about my amputation. People stared at me, and I began to wear my cosmetic prosthesis.

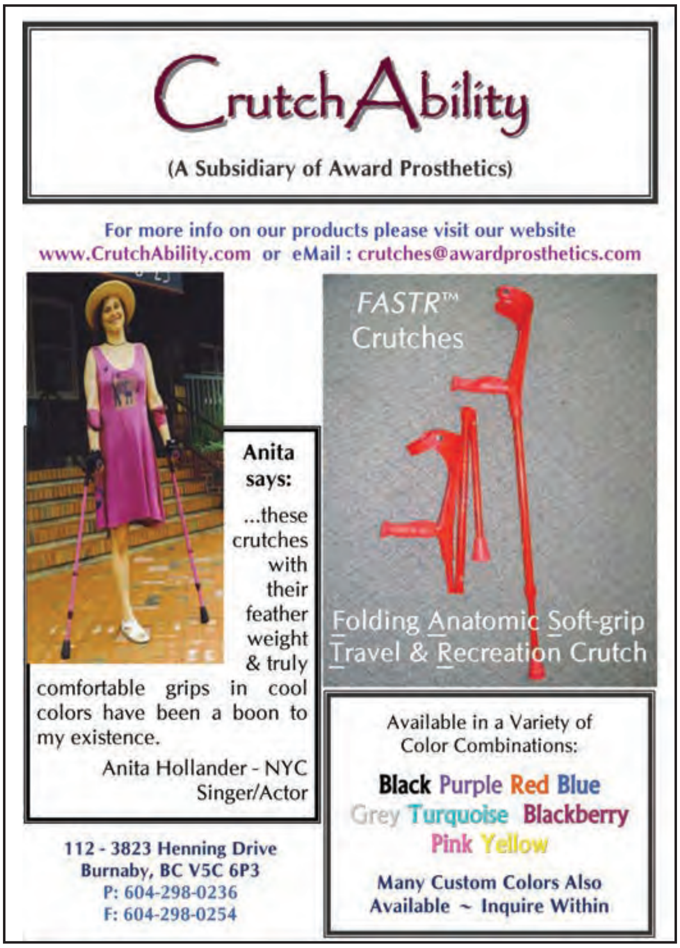
I realized I needed to establish a healthy self-identity as a person with limb loss. I searched for role models with disabilities who have overcome adversity, who could share their wisdom with me. I was afraid that the people around me, including my parents, would dismiss my search as unimportant. I felt that I had no one with whom to share my frustration.

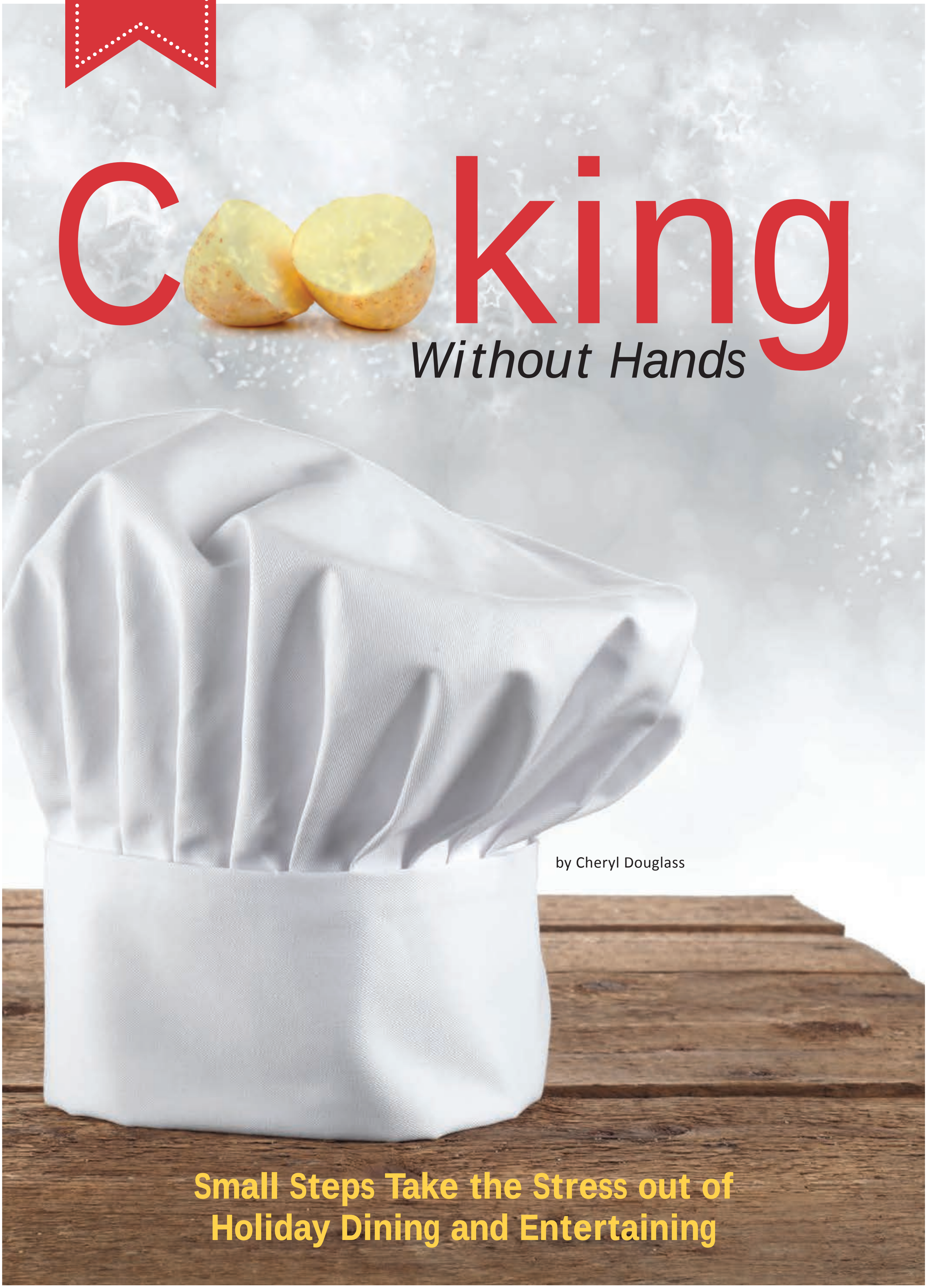
While searching the Internet, I learned the story of Dr. Young-Woo Kang, who became blind as a middle school student in South Korea. Although his family was scattered across the country, through his faith in God, his view toward his disability became more positive. In his adult years, he served as policy advisor for the National Council on Disability under the George W. Bush administration, dedicated to promoting the lesson to live life to the fullest, not in spite of, but thanks to, one's disability. He taught me an unforgettable lesson in how to view my disability in a positive way.

Meeting Carrie Davis, who has a below-elbow limb difference, through YouTube has also played an influential role in lifting me out of my darkness and shaping me for the better. I came across a video clip in which she was so confident in herself as she drove her car and talked about her life. I was so fascinated by her attitude that I watched the clip repeatedly, and later contacted her by email. She has empowered and impassioned me in many ways. I realized that I had the potential to be confident like her.

Thanks to the enduring lessons of these role models, I was awakened to the fact that people with disabilities can live fulfilling lives if they foster positivity and confidence. The moment this epiphany hit me, I realized it was time to decide whether to remain disheartened or to pull myself together for the better. Since then, I have been involved in helping others with disabilities – including helping an autistic college student as a roommate and volunteering to take notes in a class for blind students. On my path to establish a healthy identity, to serve the community and to be a living example, I am currently working as an intern for the Amputee Coalition, reading many tragic, yet inspiring, stories of American amputees. I am learning how far American society has come in supporting amputees' rights and welfare at the government and grassroots levels.

In retrospect, I tried to consciously or unconsciously sweep my disability under the rug to avoid others' stares. Growing up, the overwhelming concept of normality overshadowed the sprouting seed of confidence in myself. Now, however, I am grateful for how much progress I have made. However, I know that there are many people out there who feel lost, with no idea what to do or how to cope with it. I will continue to push forward and reach out to others. I know how difficult it is to feel alone and confused because I have been there.





Cooking

Without Hands

by Cheryl Douglass

Small Steps Take the Stress out of Holiday Dining and Entertaining

> *“The only real stumbling block*
> *is fear of failure.*
> *In cooking you've got to have*
> *a what-the-hell attitude.”*
>
> ~ Julia Child, “The French Chef”

Fear doesn’t begin to express the emotion that ran through my body as I sat on the narrow wooden board in the hospital several years ago. I felt like I was teetering on the rim of the Grand Canyon, looking down. I could picture myself tipping over the precipice, crashing to the rocks far below.

That’s what I was thinking as a physical therapist and her assistant at the National Rehabilitation Hospital tried to coax me onto the transfer board for the first time.

“Oh, you just sit on this transfer board and scoot to the wheelchair.” “Not really,” I said to myself, eyeing the floor beneath me. That board must have been the invention of a sadistic medieval prison guard.

I had come through the fight of my life against a rare strep-induced blood infection that led to toxic shock and the amputation of both arms below the elbow and both legs below the knee. After six weeks in the ICU, and two weeks in the hospital, my strength was gone. I could barely sit up, much less maneuver my still-healing arms and legs. Now, I knew that moving forward meant letting go of my fear and putting more trust in others.

When I started this new life as a quadrilateral amputee, everything seemed daunting. During rehab I tried to focus on the physical therapist’s instructions and complete the task at hand. But it wasn’t until I got back to my bed that I had a chance to reflect and figure out my own way to approach each new challenge. I came to accept that this was going to take time. I would learn to sit, stand, walk, feed myself, write, apply makeup and, though it was far from my thoughts at the time, cook.

I noticed how the therapists broke down each new skill into small, achievable steps. Instinctively, I knew this was the right approach. I remembered the lesson plans I used to prepare when I was a teacher of six-year olds learning to read. I applied this knowledge as I learned to balance on these stilts I wear called prosthetic legs and walk again. I would not learn to walk right away – sometimes I would fall. All I could do was get up again and go on, taking one small step at a time – and, believe me, my steps were small, just a couple of inches long, and ever so slow.

After two years of attempting to master my myoelectric hands (some days, they seem to have a mind of their own), I began to cook again, with the help of a friend. At first, I pictured myself cooking the way I used to before my amputations. I loved making elaborate, multi-course French dinners. I tried to prepare a three-course meal for six in one afternoon. But I quickly learned to limit how much I made at one time and to keep my meals simple. I took my time and took breaks when I needed them. Most importantly, I realized that it was crucial to plan ahead and to do one recipe at a time, preparing one dish in the morning, and another in the afternoon. In the end, the result is the same: delicious meals to enjoy with family and friends.

"The point is to have fun with cooking, and this is even more important during the holidays."

Among the many delights of cooking again are all the little catastrophes I cause. My kitchen activities become a kind of circus act in which I, equipped with my myoelectric hands, perform feats of athleticism and magic. Forks flip like juggler's batons. A chef's knife slips away and lands tip-down on the tile, its blade breaking in two. (I'm not at all worried about it nicking my toes!) My myo hand occasionally freezes in a death grip on the hand-held mixer. Or on a knife. Or on a bottle of olive oil. Sometimes I have to remove my arm and charge it with a utensil still in its clutch. I've learned to allow extra time for such things when I cook and buy extra ingredients for those occasions when an uncooperative spatula filled with chopped garlic somersaults to the floor.

While it's important to avoid fires – I am vigilant not to burn my hands or to set fire to dish towels (which I find easier to use than hot pads) – it's best to take a "what-the-hell" attitude toward flying knives or a bionic hand squeezing a box of chicken broth so hard that it explodes. Things can get messy. But I am the ringmaster of my own circus.

The point is to have fun with cooking, and this is even more important during the holidays. You can spend more time with your family and friends if you cook some dishes a day or two ahead. Another trick is to keep the menu simple. For the main course, for instance, it may be easier to dispense with roasting a heavy whole bird and cook up turkey breasts or drumsticks instead.

Here are some handy recipes for side dishes to accompany the turkey or other main dish for your holiday dinner. These recipes are arranged in the order in which they can be prepared ahead. This way, your effort is spread out over several days, so that instead of having to pull everything together at the last minute, you can enjoy your holiday guests.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH WITH GOAT CHEESE AND TOASTED HAZELNUTS

(Can be prepared two days ahead)

I recommend this recipe only if you can buy butternut squash that is already peeled, seeded and cut into cubes (available in most supermarkets' refrigerated section). Otherwise, this dish may be too time-consuming. If time is limited, just prepare the roasted squash as described in the first step. Even without the toppings, this is a delicious and colorful side dish.

Butternut Squash with Goat Cheese and Toasted Hazelnuts

Serves Six

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut into 1-inch or larger cubes

2 tablespoons olive oil

4 tablespoons butter

3 cups leeks (2 medium leeks, white and pale-green parts only)

2 teaspoons or more chopped fresh sage

4 ounces fresh goat cheese (usually comes in log form, cut into half-inch cubes)

1 cup heavy whipping cream

1/2 cup hazelnuts (or substitute walnuts or pine nuts)

DIRECTIONS

Place the squash cubes and olive oil in a large bowl. Sprinkle with salt and ground pepper and toss to coat. Spread the squash cubes on a baking sheet and place in a cold oven. (I always try to be careful not to burn the gloves on my electric hands.) Set the oven to 400° and roast the squash until tender and beginning to brown, about 35 minutes. Chop the nuts coarsely and toast in a dry skillet on the stovetop over medium heat, stirring frequently until almost golden. Keep a close eye on the nuts – they can burn quickly. Nuts continue to toast off the fire, so cook them until they are just a shade lighter than desired.

Chop the sage and set aside.

Cut off the leek roots and green leaves and slice in half lengthwise. Lay the flat sides down on the cutting board and slice crosswise into half-inch pieces. Remove any sandy soil by placing the cut leeks in the insert basket of a pasta pot filled with water. Immerse and rinse thoroughly, then remove basket to drain.

Melt 3 tablespoons of butter in a heavy medium-sized skillet over medium-low heat. Add the sliced leeks and chopped sage, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Sauté until tender but not brown, about 15 minutes.

Coat a medium-sized baking dish with butter. I use a metal baking pan (because it's lighter than glass or ceramic) that is 7" x 10" x 2." To butter, I swipe a paper cloth across soft butter and then rub it over the pan's bottom and sides.

Spread the leek mixture in the baking dish, then layer the squash and top with the cheese. This can be done a day ahead. Cover and chill.

Preheat the oven to 375°. Pour the cream over the squash and sprinkle with the toasted, chopped hazelnuts. Bake uncovered or until gratin is heated through and the cream is bubbling, about 30 minutes (40 minutes if previously chilled).

I recommend this recipe only if you can buy butternut squash that is already peeled, seeded and cut into cubes (available in most supermarkets' refrigerated section).

A Word About Measuring

I find that the easiest way to measure ingredients is with an angled-surface measuring cup, such as one made by Oxo®. I no longer mess around with measuring spoons – they're too hard to handle with electric hands. With this measuring cup, ounces can be converted into tablespoons with ease. I also use a refrigerator magnet that displays a conversion table.

measuring cup

magnet

SCALLOPED POTATOES

(Can be prepared a day ahead)

I have cooked scalloped potatoes for special occasions for over 30 years. They are always a big hit with guests and amazingly simple to make, but you can't skimp on the cream or the cheese. I have baked scalloped potatoes successfully in both deep and shallow casserole dishes by adjusting the cooking times.

Scalloped Potatoes

Serves Six

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds russet potatoes, peeled

1 cup or more cream

3 cloves garlic, chopped or mashed

1 teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons butter

1 cup Gruyère cheese,
grated (1/3 pound)

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 450°.

Grate the cheese in a food processor and set aside.

Peel and mash the garlic. I find that mashing creates a more intensely garlic-flavored potato. I can't use a garlic smasher, so I crush the garlic with a mortar and pestle with a pinch of salt.

Peel potatoes, then slice in a food processor.

Simmer the cream on the stovetop in a flameproof baking dish with the garlic, butter, salt and pepper. Let simmer about 2 minutes, or until you can smell the fragrance of the garlic. Turn off the stove.

Pack the potatoes in the cream. Sprinkle the grated cheese on top and cover with aluminum foil.

Cook in the preheated oven for about 40 minutes until the cream is absorbed and the potatoes are tender. Remove foil and broil about 4 minutes until cheese has browned.

If you are making this a day ahead, cool, cover and refrigerate the potatoes.

On serving day, warm the potatoes in a 350° oven. Depending on the depth of your baking dish, this can take 15 to 30 minutes. Then remove the foil and place the dish under a broiler to brown. If not served immediately, keep warm in the oven. If the potatoes seem dry, add a little extra cream.

Peeling potatoes is a chore made easier by the Perfect Peeler™ by Kyocera®, which has a rotating head that gives the right amount of leverage to peel potatoes or any other vegetable.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS WITH BACON

(Prepare the day of)

This dish can be prepared several hours before serving and reheated on the stovetop. It takes less time to trim Brussels sprouts than you might think. I use a pasta pot with an inner steam basket so I can lift the vegetables out of the boiling water. The apple cider vinegar brightens up the flavor of the Brussels sprouts.

Brussels Sprouts With Bacon

Serves Four

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds butternut squash, peeled,
1 1/2 pounds Brussels sprouts,
trimmed and halved

4 slices thick bacon, coarsely chopped
(about 1/4 pound more if you like bacon)

2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

DIRECTIONS

Trim the bottoms of the Brussels sprouts and cut in half, lengthwise. Set aside.

Cut the bacon into half-inch pieces.

Fry the bacon pieces on medium to low heat. Remove from the pan and cool. Reserve the bacon fat in the skillet.

Cook the Brussels sprouts in the insert basket of a 4-quart pasta pot of boiling salted water. Make sure the sprouts are covered in water and boil until tender, about 4 minutes. Remove the insert basket and drain.

Heat the bacon drippings in the skillet and add the Brussels sprouts. Sauté until the sprouts begin to brown, about 5 minutes.

Add 1/2 cup water to the skillet, cover and continue to cook until the Brussels sprouts are crisp on the outside and tender when pricked with a fork, about an additional 5 minutes.

Stir in the bacon, the apple cider vinegar, and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Peeling Garlic

Peeling garlic can be a major challenge for upper-limb amputees like me. After many tries, I found that the fastest way is to grab the garlic bulb in both hands and crush it until the cloves pop out. Then I cut the cloves into quarters or as many pieces as necessary to loosen the skin. I cut off the paper around the cloves or use the tip of the knife to extract the garlic pulp. If that doesn't work, I smash the pieces with the side of my prosthetic hand.

Gift Ideas
FOR AMPUTEES

Finding useful products to make life more enjoyable and manageable is just one part of the process of adjusting to life with limb loss. Even longtime amputees who have found ways to adapt are pleasantly surprised to find new gadgets on the market that help them in specific and meaningful ways.

Everyone has received a gift that ends up sitting in the back of their closet, but with a little thought applied to what people might need to make their lives better, giving can be fun instead of stressful and wasteful. People often think that they are expected to know what a loved one wants or needs, but there's no harm in simply asking, which can go a long way to help prevent disappointment. The nice thing is that thoughtful giving doesn't have to break the bank, either. Check out these gift suggestions for the special amputee in your life.

Aids for Everyday Life

From grip bars for the home or car to reaching aids to electric spice grinders, numerous products exist to make everyday living easier and more manageable. As with many areas of need, some products are designed specifically for those with disabilities, while others just happen to work well with limited mobility.

AbleData | abledata.com
My Secret Pantry | mysecretpantry.com
Reacher.com | shop.reacher.com

Clothing and Gear

It's becoming more common to see clothing that uses zippers and Velcro to increase ease of wear for amputees and people with other disabilities. Fortunately, that also means a little more variety in terms of style and preference too.

Buck and Buck, Inc. | buckandbuck.com
Silvert's | silverts.com

For people who simply want a humorous or thought-provoking message on a T-shirt to communicate their identity as an amputee, there are several to choose from.

The Happy Amputee | cafepress.com/hapamp
Zazzle | zazzle.com/amputee+tshirts

Gardening and Backyard

Maneuvering in the garden can cause back aches and cramping for anyone. Tools with ergonomic handles and cushioned kneelers might be the perfect gift for someone who wants to get back to the garden but needs a little help getting there.

Arthritis Supplies | arthritissupplies.com
Gardener's Supply Company | gardeners.com

Rest and Relaxation

Silky sleep masks, soothing scents and spa splurges can offer an extra bit of pampering to a loved one. Gift certificates are widely available directly through spas and also now may even be purchased online.

All About Massagers | allaboutmassagers.com
SpaFinder Wellness, Inc. | spafinder.com

Of course, a print subscription to Amputee Coalition's award-winning magazine, inMotion, *is also useful and always appreciated. It's especially rewarding to know that your loved one will have access to information to help them along on their journey to recovery and success. Call 888/267-5669 or visit* amputee-coalition.org *to order today!*

You can also help raise awareness and support Amputee Coalition's services by purchasing select clothing and accessories at cafepress.com/amputeecoalition.

Happy Holidays

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our friends, donors and sponsors for your generosity and support this year, and to thank you for helping us make sure amputees do not go through their journey alone.

With the holidays approaching and the season of giving upon us, please consider a gift to the Amputee Coalition. Whether it helps to send a child to camp, support our national advocacy efforts or provide peer support to new amputees, your year-end, tax-deductible gift will make a difference in the lives of the 2 million Americans living with limb loss or limb difference.

Please mail your check to the address below or visit us online at amputee-coalition.org/donate.

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All donations to the Amputee Coalition are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

10 Tips for BELOW-KNEE AMPUTEES

Who Use a Liner and Pin Suspension System

by John Peter Seaman, CP

The following tips can help make using a below-knee prosthesis a little less complex and a more comfortable experience.

One | **If you plan to sit for an extended period** with your knee flexed, quickly depress and release the lock release button. This will allow the pin to pull out of the lock slightly, relieving some of the tension in the liner over your kneecap and the distal/anterior portion of the front of your tibia (shinbone). When you stand back up, you'll get the one or two clicks back on your pin, and your limb will seat down into the socket again.

Two | **After you roll on your liner,** if the top (the cut part) is tight around your thigh, it can irritate your skin. If this occurs, you can pull a thin four-to-six-inch-long tube sock (1-ply, cut so that both ends are open) onto your residual limb before rolling on your liner. Position it on your thigh above the knee so that the cut edge of your liner, when rolled on, sits in about the middle of the tube sock. Then roll your liner onto your limb so that it covers the bottom half of the tube sock, and pull the top half of the tube sock (that's still exposed on your leg after rolling on the liner) down over the outside of the top of the liner. The tube sock will act as an interface between the liner and your skin, reducing friction and wicking out sweat.

Three | **If you feel your limb slipping around inside the liner due to sweating,** take everything off and dry the inside of the liner and your residual limb. Some amputees need to do this several times a day, especially in the summer. You can also try pulling on a thin, full-length, 1-ply prosthetic sock over your residual limb before you roll on your liner. Have the sock long enough so that it extends out beyond the cut end of your liner so you can pull the top part of the sock out over the top of the liner. The sock will wick the sweat from between the liner and your skin.

Four | **Trimming the hair on your residual limb** allows the inside of your liner to contact your skin more closely. Clip it short, 1/8 inch or so – do not shave it. This can help prevent your liner from slipping on your leg when you sweat.

Five | **If you need to add prosthetic socks over your liner** to replace lost volume during the day, you may need to add a partial sock instead of full-length socks. If you pull on several full-length socks, the socket may start feeling tight around your knee, especially on the sides; at the same time, it may still feel a little loose at the bottom. This is when you can pull on a partial (short) sock created by cutting off the bottom part of a full-length sock. When pulled over your liner, this sock will stop before reaching the knee area and will help replace lost volume in the distal end of the socket without tightening up the proximal end of the socket around the knee. Sometimes a proximal sock (a portion of sock that has two open ends) pulled on over your liner and positioned around the knee area before you don your prosthesis will prevent your residual limb from going too deeply into the socket during weight-bearing. Experiment with combinations of sock plies, positions and lengths to find what works best for you.

Six | **If you change shoes often,** this can affect how your prosthesis functions. When you're fitted with your prosthesis, your prosthetist aligns it to match the shoe you're fitted in. If you change into shoes that have a different heel-to-sole-thickness relationship than your original shoes, your prosthesis won't be properly aligned; this may cause instability in your knee when you walk. If this happens, you may need to add or remove heel wedges or inserts in your shoes to compensate for the difference in heel thickness.

Seven | **When you receive a new prosthesis,** you will typically get two new liners. Alternate using these liners on a daily basis; this allows the two liners to be broken in at an even pace.

Eight | **If you wear prosthetic socks over your liner,** keep the end of the sock off the pin at the end of the liner before donning your prosthesis. These socks will have a small slit to allow the pin to pass through. If you get the sock stuck in the lock when you insert the pin while donning your prosthesis, it could make it hard to remove the prosthesis.

Nine | **Using soapy water between your residual limb and the liner** can sometimes allow you to slip your limb out of the liner while the liner is still locked into the socket. Then you might be able to remove the liner from the socket. If not, take your prosthesis to your prosthetist.

Ten | **When rolling a line onto your residual limb,** roll it all the way inside out so that the closed end is almost flat. Hold it tightly against the end of your limb while rolling it on to avoid trapping any air between the end of your residual limb and the liner. If this occurs, your limb will "piston" when you walk, creating suction and resulting in a blister.

Exercises

by Cindy Asch-Martin

Balance (core stability) is important for everyone, but even more so for amputees.

Balance plays a major role in our lives. Every time you turn to close a door, go up or down stairs or even take a simple walk, there's a chance that something could cause you to lose your balance. In some cases, injuries can occur. Prevention, awareness, building strength and confidence are the keys to success.

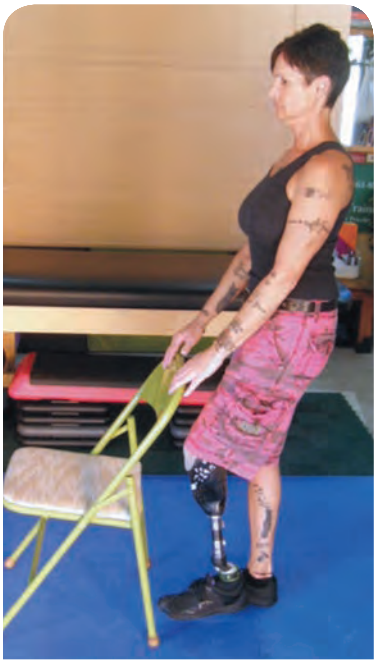
All lower-limb amputees have one thing in common: the lack of the ability to feel ground surface differences. Even walking through your own backyard can be hazardous, let alone climbing curbs, navigating around toys in the living room, etc.

For your safety, learning how to engage your core muscles and coordinate your mind to help focus and concentrate on balance is paramount. The good thing about learning how to improve your balance is that no equipment is required. However, there are exercises that would be more appropriate for active amputees, just like there are simpler exercises for beginners. Learning how to control your core and build a good foundation is where we will begin.

Some of these exercises can be done with or without your prosthesis on.

The first exercise targets beginners (see Figure 1). Using a chair for safety purposes, beginners should hold on lightly, making sure the chair is secure and cannot tip over. Take in a few good slow inhales and slow exhales, then slowly lift up your prosthetic leg, no higher than two inches, by leading with your knee (Figure 2).


>> FIGURE ONE


>> FIGURE TWO

>> FIGURE THREE

Try to keep your upper body nice and relaxed. The more tension in your body, the more difficult you will make it on yourself. Once you feel that you can lift up your prosthetic leg from the floor, remove your hands from the chair and count to five, then return it to the floor. If you find that you're having a difficult time, that's normal. Don't get frustrated – just keep trying. Lift each leg five times, holding it up for a five-second count. If you need to put your hand(s) on the back of the chair, that's OK – the more you practice this, the easier it will become.

If you don't have a prosthetic leg or you want to try this exercise without your prosthesis, you should begin by sitting in a chair with the back of another chair

>> FIGURE FOUR

in front of you (Figure 3). Again, make sure that chair is secure. Stand up on your leg; once you are relaxed, try to slowly remove your hand(s) from the chair back. See how long you can stand there without any movement (Figure 4). Once you get good at standing motionless, try to move your leg or limb to the side and hold for a count of five, then try to move it backwards and hold for another count of five.

Exercise #2 would be considered an intermediate level exercise. You can find a small ball or you can just use your hands. Standing with your feet shoulder width apart, raise one leg (either one) and either touch your hands together or transfer the ball to your other hand underneath your leg when it is in the up position (Figure 5). Then slowly lower your leg down. Alternate your legs; you'll have to balance on your real leg as well as your prosthetic leg. You'll notice that when you lift your prosthetic leg, your real leg will be moving at the ankle – that's what is helping to stabilize you. You can't do that with your prosthetic leg, as it is rigid and can't assist you while trying to balance on it. Doing that in this manner is safe – just take it slow. Let your muscles work and try to avoid using momentum.

Fast motions with exercises won't help to work your muscles or gain balance. Disciplining your mind and body with slow, controlled movements will lead to success.

>> FIGURE FIVE

JOHN HATTINGH, CP, LPO, CPO (SA)
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Industry leader, **John Hattingh, CP, LPO, CP(SA)** brings more than three decades of patient care to a new practice, Prosthetic Care Facility of Virginia, in Leesburg.

Prosthetic Care Facility is a full-service clinical practice providing prostheses for lower and upper limb amputees of all ages and abilities as well as congenital defects including PFFD, Amelia, and phocomelia.

As the chief prosthetist of Prosthetic Care Facility, Hattingh utilizes his engineering background and years of prosthetic experience to take his patients to the highest level of function and mobility possible.

"My forte is finding solutions for difficult cases."

HATTINGH IS CERTIFIED IN THE FOLLOWING TECHNOLOGIES:
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- Evolution Industries and Harmony™ elevated vacuum prosthetic systems
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SPECIALTIES:
Transfemoral socket design, Silicone suspension systems,
Paralympic athletes prosthetic design, TMR (Targeted Muscle Reinnervation)

Hattingh is well-known in the Pacific Northwest where he owned Northwest Prosthetics & Orthotics, Seattle, and was an adjunct lecturer at the University of Washington. He transitioned out of his practice in 2009 and traveled to his native South Africa, where he lectured and donated his expertise to treating children that did not have medical insurance.

Prosthetic Care Facility of Virginia...
Helping to Return Mobility and Function to Limb-Loss Patients

Most amputees aren't offended when a child asks a question – children are inquisitive by nature.

Disability Etiquette

by Megan Jones

I've been a right above-knee amputee for six years. People often come up to me with questions. I suppose I just give off a friendly and open vibe; I usually don't mind when someone has a question or comment – I would rather they asked than make assumptions. There is, however, a proper etiquette for talking to someone about his or her amputation, most of which falls under the category of common sense.

For instance, it's human nature to notice what is obviously different. We all do it. Please try, however, not to stare. To a new amputee, it can be incredibly unnerving. Do not ever ask to see someone's residual limb. This is a very personal part of us. Some amputees don't mind, but most do, especially new amputees.

I tend to make fun of my amputation. I've created a line of amputee T-shirts that I wear not only because I'm comfortable with my amputation but it also helps others feel more at ease. Jokes are my personal preference for

coping (especially when things go wrong, such as losing suction and having my leg fall off), but many amputees don't see the humor in it, especially if they've just joined the amputee community. Always err on the side of caution when it comes to humor. We'll let you know with our actions and words whether or not we find humor appropriate.

Most amputees aren't offended when a child asks a question – children are inquisitive by nature. Not long after I lost my leg, a young boy walked up to me and asked, "How come you've only got one leg?" I wasn't offended and explained that my leg had gotten very sick. The boy's mother, on the other hand, was mortified. Don't be afraid to allow your child to ask questions about amputation or disability in general. The only way we can raise awareness and change the way the world accepts or doesn't accept disability is to start with teaching our children that there is nothing to be afraid of.

Most people don't seem to know what to say or do around new amputees. There is no shame in admitting this. The honest truth is we don't either. It takes time for new amputees to become comfortable and to form their own personal opinions and etiquette standards. The best thing you can do for a new amputee is to simply be there. Allow them to vent, cry, laugh or use whatever coping skills they need. Follow their lead and let them know that they are not alone.

> It's human nature to notice what is obviously different. We all do it.

I never cease to be amazed at the number of people who have to give me their two cents. I've been told that I won't go to heaven because I'm not a "whole person." It's been assumed that just because I'm a young adult that I'm a war veteran and have been called a murderer. I've been told that I lost my leg because I'm not religious enough. I've been told that "people like me" are of no use to society. On the flip side, I've also been praised for my courage, strength and perseverance. When it comes to personal beliefs about disabilities, it's best to take a lesson from Bambi: If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all.

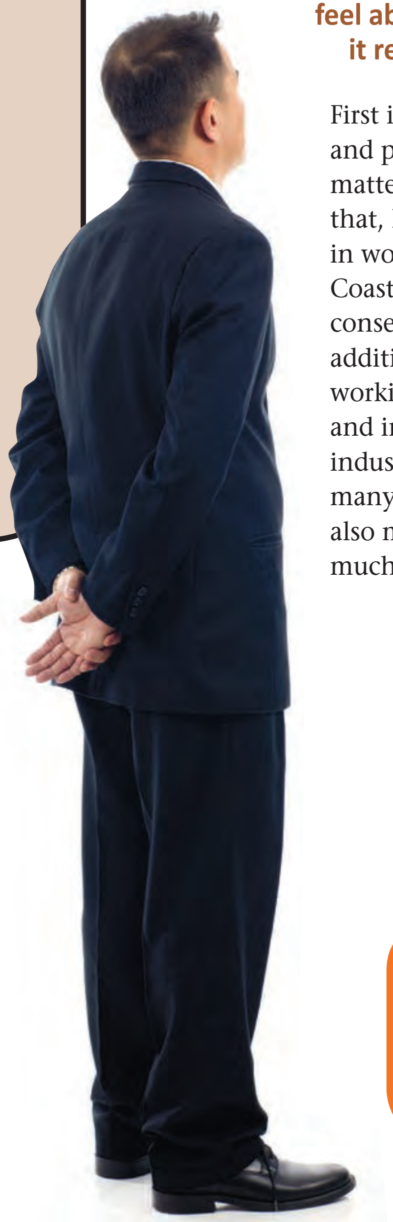
No two amputees are alike. We all have our own personal etiquette standards. If you're unsure of what to say or do, the best option is to simply ask and remember that we're people just like you. The fact that we have fewer limbs is only one small part of what makes us who we are.

Tips from a "FELLOW" FASHIONISTA

Hello, and welcome back!

It's so exciting to know my fashionistas are out there and are sharing their fabulous input. With that, I am thrilled to share some interesting advice from a "fellow" fashionista!

Donning my "interviewer" hat, here's what Mr. Fabulous Fashionista had to share about his prosthetically induced fashion situations.



As a high-power attorney, how do you feel about fashion and how it reflects your image?

First impressions matter, and professionalism matters. Having said that, I have an advantage in working on the West Coast, where things are less conservative, and I have additional advantages from working in Los Angeles and in the entertainment industry. That means I have many more options, and it also means a tie is optional much of the time.

What is your typical work attire? Suit? Tie?

Primarily it's business casual. The shirt will usually have a collar, but I also love mock turtlenecks and turtlenecks in the cooler months. Fridays tend to be a bit more casual. But regardless of the day, I have a thing for nice shoes, and the way I make that work is to spend more money up front on a really nice pair and then take extremely good care of them. A really good pair of shoes can last a lifetime, and as a wise woman once told me: "Never get rid of a good pair of shoes, because every 30 years that style will be the hot new 'in' thing again." And she's right.

A really good pair of shoes can last a lifetime.

>> KEEP YOUR success stories and solutions coming to me at: Fashionista@amputee-coalition.org!

What is your typical casual attire?

Usually jeans and a T-shirt, with a hoodie in the cooler months. I wear a lot of black, so I have no shortage of black T-shirts and black hoodies to choose from. If I'm going to be outside in the sun for any length of time, you can add a pair of Ray-Bans and a baseball cap – I keep my hair cropped, so my head gets sunburned very easily.

Please tell me a little bit about the prosthesis that you wear.

I wear the Michelangelo hand from Ottobock as my primary prosthesis. I got it last year and it was a game-changer for me. It's incredibly quick, lifelike and useful, and it's the closest thing I've had to a second hand since losing my real one long ago. I also bling it out with one or more thick bracelets from Atomic Jewelry in Los Angeles (they've outfitted many famous rock 'n' rollers), and I wear my watch on the Michelangelo as well.

With all of the fashion-related questions, are there any particular brands you wear, and why? For example, I am a victim to Tod's shoes because they are fabulously fashionable and functional.

There are, indeed. I wear American Apparel long-sleeve shirts as a base layer or casual T-shirt a lot. I get my turtlenecks, mock turtlenecks, Henley shirts and casual button-down shirts from L.L. Bean. They are all well-made and affordable, and my trick is to take them to a tailor and have them altered to fit me a little more closely. This essentially gets you shirts that look and fit like high-end designer items, but at about a fifth of the price. For jeans, I'm partial to True Religion, Joe's and Naked & Famous. On the bank-breaking side of things, Prada's Chelsea boots are my favorite pair of footwear, and I definitely have a head-to-toe weakness for Alexander McQueen and John Varvatos.

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A Christmas I'll Never Forget

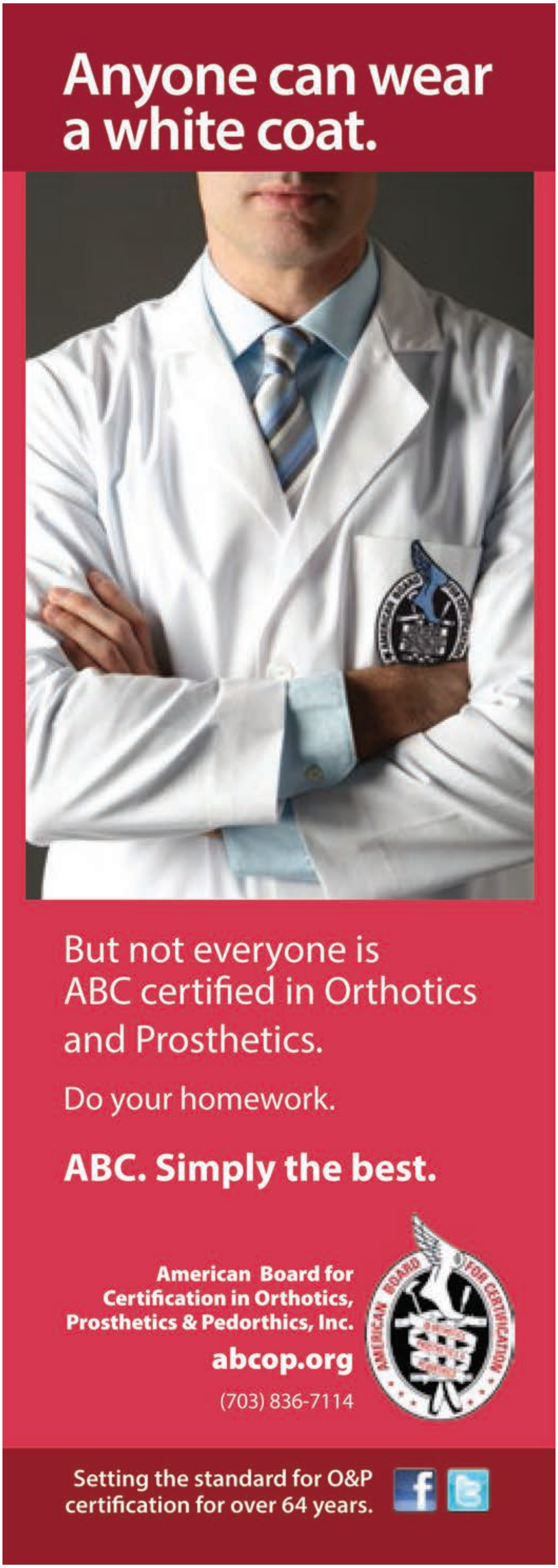
by Peggy Chenoweth

Since my son Robby was born, the focus of Christmas has shifted in our family. My husband Scott and I are now devoted to making the holiday memorable and happy for Robby. Yes, Santa will bring some pretty cool presents (if I do say so myself), but I have also flooded his days with crafts and holiday projects. Buying presents for each other is no longer a priority. Scott should be particularly grateful for the shift in focus!

Scott has many wonderful attributes. Picking out gifts is not one of his talents. I love him, but he has the romantic inclination of a slug.

I can't help but recall Christmas 2003. Much to Scott's chagrin, this holiday will never be forgotten. The events of this Christmas have been retold and have already been incorporated into the folklore of our family and friends.

2003 was a difficult year for me. It was the year of my amputation. By the time Christmas came around, I was physically recovered from the limb loss, but emotionally fragile. I desperately needed reassurance that, although I was missing my leg, I was still loved and desired.



Scott and I had been dating for three years. We had discussed marriage but mutually agreed that I should be recovered from the amputation before moving forward with our relationship. By December 2003 I had been walking for six weeks. I was getting stronger every day. I needed something to look forward to. I was ready to get engaged.

We spent Christmas Day apart that year. I was at my mom's house and he was in Ohio. Scott and I exchanged gifts before he left, but per his request we each kept one gift back. He explained that he had a "special" gift that he wanted to give to me in Ohio in front of his family.

My mom, my cousins and I speculated all day about my ring. Surely I was going to receive a proposal the following day. We were all excited, and I was over the moon. For the first time since my amputation, I was seeing a ray of happiness. I was still loved and he still wanted to marry me despite my amputation.

I woke up early the next morning to fly to Ohio. After struggling through the airport with a painful residual limb, I was thrilled to see Scott waiting for me at baggage claim. After attending the obligatory family luncheon, I finally arrived at his mom's house. After exchanging pleasantries and holiday presents, it was time for our "special" gift exchange.

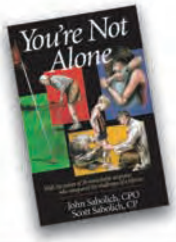
Scott emerged from the back bedroom carrying a small square box. It was wrapped with a red bow. I remember every detail of the presentation. After all, this was "my moment."

Scott was beaming as he handed me the box. My heart began to beat quickly, and I was pretty sure it could be heard across the room. My hands were shaking as I nervously unwrapped the paper...

A pedometer.

Yes, he bought me a pedometer – for someone who just had an amputation and was feeling fat and ugly. And he bought me a walking-oriented weight-loss device. To this day, Scott is quick to point out that it was a very cool pedometer that could be hooked up to the Internet so that my information could be uploaded. Only being in the presence of his mother kept me from telling him where to upload his pedometer!

Scott didn't realize that by giving me that pedometer he was actually providing a gift for all of my family and friends. Now, whenever someone receives a present that is deemed "inadequate" or "thoughtless," the giver can simply shrug and say, "Well, at least it isn't a pedometer."


You're Not Alone
John Sabolich, CPO
Scott Sabolich, CP


SCOTT SABOLICH

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