

## Prosthetic Liners- Cleaning and Maintenance Tips

Through-out the day, prosthetic liners, ply socks, and sockets all accumulate dirt, oil, and bacteria that can lead to uncomfortable skin disorders if not cleaned or maintained. Cleaning your prosthetic liners should become part of your daily hygiene routine. Regular cleaning of anything touching your skin is an easy and effective way to keep your limb healthy.

**Below are tips and tricks to keep your prosthetic liners clean.**

### SOAPS

**-Using Prosthetic Cleaners:** There are many prosthetic cleansers formulated to be used on prosthetic liner materials like gel, urethane, or silicone. Check with your prosthetist or manufacturer if the cleanser is compatible with your liner. Often these cleansers are safe for skin, but also check your own sensitivity to them on a small patch of your skin before using it on your liner or residual limb.

**-Gentle dishwashing soap:** Many prosthetist will recommend using Dawn dishwashing soap. Do NOT use other detergents as they are harsher than Dawn. Again, check with the manufacturer and do a skin spot test.

**-Your own body wash:** Many amputees swear by this. Since you already use it on your body, your skin will likely not react to it. Avoid body wash that have beads or scrubs, as it may damage the liner material.

The key thing to remember when selecting a soap is that it is gentle enough for your liners, yet anti-microbial, so that you won't get an allergic reaction from using it. It will take some trial and error at first, but once you find one that works for you, your skin will thank you.

### Washing your Prosthetic Liners:

1. Remove the liner from your residual limb and turn it inside out.
2. With warm water, rinse off any debris that may have collected while you're wearing it.
3. Use a drop or two of soap and apply it thoroughly. Rub gently to remove the debris that has built up inside.
4. Run warm water over it and rinse well until there is no soap residue left.
5. You can also wash the outside of the liner. Make sure you rinse the outside just as well as the inside. You don't want soap residue build up on the fabric part of your liner.
6. With a non-lint towel, pat the gel or silicone side of your liner dry. Then turn right side in so the gel or silicone is on the inside again.
7. Use a liner drying rack and let it air dry. Do NOT dry your liner with the gel or silicone material exposed to the air. It will speed up drying and it will crack.
8. Allow your liner to dry completely before wearing it again. You should have a spare liner so that you can wear a clean one while the other one dries.

## Once a week recommendations:

Always check with the manufacturer if your liner requires any of the following:

**Baby Oil** -use 2-3 drops of baby oil and apply it on the inside of your liner while it is still wet, then pat it dry. This will ensure your liner material keeps a bit of moisture so that it does not crack or tear. Again, not all liner materials are the same. Check with the manufacturer.

**Rubbing alcohol** -at least once a week, use rubbing alcohol to disinfect the inside of your liner. Spray or apply rubbing alcohol on your liner and let it sit for a few minutes. Then wash it back out with the warm water to rinse any alcohol residue. The rubbing alcohol is a drying agent so you do not want to dry the liner material. It will speed the aging of your liner. You only want to use the rubbing alcohol to get rid of bacteria that cause your liner to smell.

### What to avoid

-Scented Soap: lotions or anything that has harsh chemicals in it to wash your liners with or apply on your liner. Do NOT apply scented creams on your liners.

-Essential Oils: If you keep a good liner hygiene, there is no need to use essential oils to mask the odors of your liner. The essential oil could also cause the liner material to react and cause issues later.

-Rips, Tears and Embedded debris: Visibly check your liner when washing it and make sure your liner is in good condition. A tear in a liner can spell trouble.

-Hand Sanitizers or other harsh alcohol products: Again, keep a good daily hygiene routine instead of relying on chemicals to clean your liner.

Remember, washing your prosthetic liners thoroughly and regularly will help prevent skin irritation, rashes, and infection, and keeping it clean will keep it from getting smelly too. In fact, cleaning each part of your prosthesis should be a part of your daily skincare routine. This kind of daily and weekly maintenance can also keep your prosthetic liners from wearing out sooner than they should.