

FALL PREVENTION

Injury from falls is one of the leading reasons why individuals have to return to the hospital following an amputation. Delays in healing or need for revision surgery can be caused.

Many falls are preventable. The following suggestions can help improve safety:

BATHROOM

Have safety grab bars installed professionally in the bathroom whenever possible. Your health care provider should be able to give you specifications for appropriate placement.

Always use a non-skid bath mat and avoid use of additional carpeting around the commode or tub that could catch a crutch tip or walker leg.

If possible, make use of an aqua sock or surf shoe to improve traction when bathing.

Be sure tub bench or shower seat has rubber tips and fits securely into the tub or shower.

HOUSEHOLD

Remove all loose or throw rugs from the home.

Examine rooms and hallways for furniture such as coffee tables, end tables, hampers, etc. that are in positions making it difficult to pass with a walker, crutches, or wheelchair.

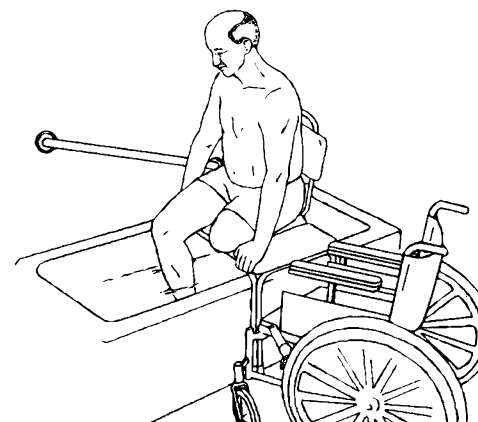
A ramp should be built by an experienced carpenter. It should include sturdy railing and not exceed one inch of rise for every foot of length.

Consider changing thick and spongy carpeting that can cause the sound foot or walker / crutches to drag or catch.

Have railing installed professionally to steps entering the home or within.

Rearrange kitchen cabinets to bring all essential items into cabinets that are low or do not require long reach.

BATHROOM



NIGHTTIME / BEDROOM

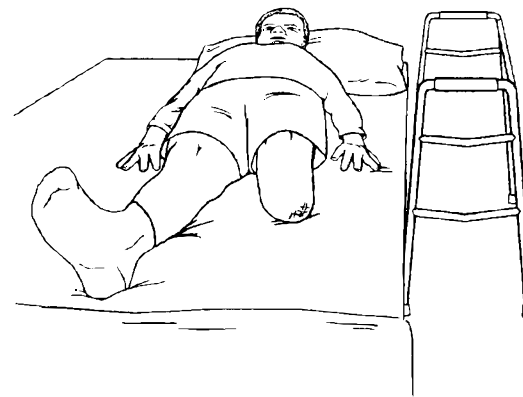
Use night lights in the bedroom and path to the bathroom. Inability to see clearly can decrease balance. Many falls occur at night when it is too dark to see clearly and you may not be fully awake.

Place walker tight to side of bed when sleeping. This is a great safeguard and reminder in the middle of the night.

After sitting for a long period or first thing in the morning when getting up to walk, stand still for a minute before moving to let blood pressure adapt and ensure stability.

If using a standard bed, legs may be lowered to make it more level with wheelchair if using a transfer board.

NIGHTTIME / BEDROOM



ASSISTIVE EQUIPMENT

If using a bedside commode, adjust height to level of wheelchair seat or bed, *whichever will be used most*. Also, improve stability by placing tight to the bed or against the wall.

Utilize a removable rigid dressing during the healing phase to protect the residual limb in case of a fall.

Wheelchair safety can be enhanced by double checking that brakes are locked before any transfer. Have loose brakes repaired immediately.

Follow transfer procedures as outlined on patient transfer sheets.

ASSISTIVE EQUIPMENT

