

## Shrinkers

Shrinkers are compressive garments used to help shape and control volume change in a residual limb. There are two kinds of shrinkers, below the knee which is referenced as BK and above the knee which is reference as AK.

### Below Knee (BK) Shrinkers

There are two common types of below knee shrinkers: **Compressogrip** and **4 Way Stretch Shrinker**.

A **Compressogrip** style shrinker is in the shape of an elastic tube with a ring on it as you can see depicted by the figure one found to the right.

1. The end of the limb is inserted into one end of the shrinker and the ring is pulled gently to the end of the residual limb.
2. The rest of the tube that is left past the ring is then reflected back onto the limb. It is very important that the first layer of this style of shrinker is pulled past the knee as to not put excessive pressure behind the knee.
3. It is desirable to have the second reflected layer come up past the knee, but it is ok if there is not enough material.



Figure 1

The second style of shrinker is the **4 Way Stretch Shrinker**.

This type has only one open end to which the limb is inserted and pulled on until the limb touches the other sewn end of the shrinker. This form of shrinker is depicted by figure two found to the right.



Figure 2

### Helpful Tips & Tricks

1. Shrinkers are often ordered from a doctor to help control limb swelling soon after an amputation.

2. It is sometimes helpful to have two people to stretch the shrinker and gently apply it to the limb when the incision is still healing.
3. As the limb heals the end will become more tolerant and soon enough a shrinker will be able to be pulled onto the limb much as a sock is pulled on.
4. Before getting into a prosthesis, it is important to use a shrinker as much as possible to reduce the limb size and maintain volume. This will help keep the limb stable before getting fit for a prosthesis.
5. Once you are in a preparatory prosthesis it is important that you still utilize a shrinker when not wearing a prosthesis. This will help retain limb volume and shape after your limb has been in a prosthesis as limb volume fluctuations can cause fit issues.
6. Shrinkers are often worn to bed by even long-term prosthetic users because body fluid can cause a limb to swell at night making it difficult to put on a prosthesis after waking.

### Above Knee (AK) Shrinkers

There are two common types of above knee shrinkers: **Compressogrip** and a **4 Way Stretch Shrinker**.

A **Compressogrip** style shrinker is in the shape of an elastic tube with a ring on it.

The end of the limb is inserted into one end of the shrinker and the ring is pulled gently to the end of the residual limb.

1. The rest of the tube that is left past the ring is then reflected back onto the limb.
2. This type of shrinker often has a waist belt which will wrap around the pelvis to keep the shrinker from migrating off the end of the limb. As you can see depicted in figure three to the right.



*Figure 3*

The second type of shrinker is a **4 Way Stretch Shrinker**. This type has only one open end to which the limb is inserted and pulled on until the limb touches the other sewn end of the shrinker, this type can also have a waist belt to help keep the shrinker from migrating off the end of the limb.



## Helpful Tips & Tricks

1. Shrinkers are often ordered from a doctor to help control limb swelling soon after an amputation.
2. It is sometimes helpful to have two people to stretch the shrinker and gently apply it to the limb when the incision is still healing.
3. As the limb heals the end will become more tolerant and soon enough a shrinker will be able to be pulled onto the limb much as a sock is pulled on.
4. Before getting into a prosthesis, it is important to use a shrinker as much as possible to reduce the limb size and maintain volume. This will help keep the limb stable before getting fit for a prosthesis.
5. Once you are in a preparatory prosthesis it is important that you still utilize a shrinker when not wearing a prosthesis. This will help retain limb volume and shape after your limb has been in a prosthesis as limb volume fluctuations can cause fit issues.
6. Shrinkers are often worn to bed by even long-term prosthetic users because body fluid can cause a limb to swell at night making it difficult to put on a prosthesis after waking.

