



NEWSLETTER ♦ 21st Edition ♦ May 2015 ♦ *Special Mother's Day Issue*

Note from Belinda:

I am pleased to be able to present to you, our readers, the following two very touching articles both written by Lisa Grey, the mother of group member Kelly Reitz. The first was written when Kelly was eight years old and was originally written for the Ford Louisville Assembly Plant newsletter and the second was written specifically for our newsletter. When Kelly mentioned to me that her mother had written an article about her years ago, I asked if she could possibly find a copy. She was able to find it and when she sent it to me, I was so deeply moved by the love in her mother's words that I asked if we could share it with the group. I then asked Lisa if she would consider writing a 2nd article. She sent it to me the very next day. When I spoke to her to thank her, she said that at first she was worried that she wouldn't know what to write, but as soon as she sat down and began, the words just flowed out. That was because she was writing from her heart. If you have seen the two of them together, you have



witnessed the love and pride that they feel for each other. So, in honor of all mothers, we share with you Lisa's stories

MOVING FORWARD FEATURE

(Taken from the Ford Louisville Assembly Plant Newsletter • March 1988)

A New Beginning

— by Lisa Grey

It was the 7th of October, 1980, a day that would change our lives forever. It all started that evening. I went shopping with a friend to buy my daughter Kelly a birthday present. I couldn't believe that in just five more days she would be a year old. We (my husband Lou & I) had a son Jesse who was going on two & we had very much wanted a girl. We were more than blessed with a healthy daughter. She was also very pretty with piercing dark brown eyes.

That day I returned from shopping & heard Kelly waking up from her nap. I fixed her bottle & went to get her. She drank from the bottle as usual but I couldn't get her to eat anything. I thought she wasn't eating because her teeth were coming in. Later that evening she came down with a slight fever. I gave her some baby aspirin & held her in my lap. She continued crying off & on throughout the night. As I sat rocking Kelly in the early hours of the morning, I tried to remember if teething had been this bad with Jesse.

At 8:30 that morning she finally went to sleep once again. I laid her in bed &, feeling exhausted, I went & lay down. Almost immediately I awoke & went straight in to check on Kelly. My God, I couldn't believe my eyes! She was covered with purple splotches & when I picked her up she was as limp as a rag doll. Could this possibly be some childhood disease I had missed? With Kelly in my arms I ran to the phone & called my neighbor Susie. I asked her to come right over. I hung up & called the doctor. The nurse who

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AMPUTEE COALITION ADVICE

inMotion • Volume 23, Issue 4 July | August 2013

10 Tips to Improve Your Prosthetic Outcome

— by Pete Seaman, CP

Successful prosthesis use involves a 50/50 effort between you and your prosthetist. Even longtime prosthesis wearers can experience minor problems, but communication and regular maintenance can usually prevent the little problems from becoming big ones. Here are 10 tips for improving your outcome as a lower-limb prosthetic user:

1. See your primary care physician (PCP) at least every six months; be sure to discuss the condition of your residual limb and the function of your prosthesis. If you have prosthetic needs, such as new liners, socks or shrinkers, or if your socket no longer fits properly, causing discomfort or instability, inform your PCP, who can write a prescription for you.
2. You need to be informed about the terms of your medical insurance coverage, whether you're insured by Medicare, Medicaid, or other private insurance. You should understand what your deductibles and co-pays are, and that if you only have a primary insurer, you may be able to buy a secondary coverage policy so that more of your prosthetic expenses are covered when you need them.
3. Know what your K-level is and how it affects the components your prosthetist can use when fabricating your prosthesis. K-levels are defined by Medicare and are used throughout the medical insurance community to define an amputee's mobility level. They are determined by your PCP and prosthetist and they range from K-0 to K-4, with K-4 being a very active/athletic individual or an active child. You should discuss your K-level with your prosthetist and your PCP and make sure it is documented in their notes.
4. Even if you think nothing is wrong, you should see your prosthetist at least every three months to have your residual limb and prosthesis checked. Between scheduled visits to your prosthetist, if you notice something is wrong with your limb or prosthesis, schedule an appointment.
5. Good hygiene is very important for lower-limb amputees, especially as it relates to your limb and daily cleaning of the inside of your liners. Pay particular attention to your sound foot and leg to make sure they do not cause you problems down the road. Cracks in dry skin, blisters, and ulcers can all lead to infection and possible amputation surgery.
6. Just wearing your prosthesis all day while sitting around the house or moving about in a wheelchair does not do much good for your overall health. You should strive to be active,

— Continued on Page 2 Column 2 —

A New Beginning (cont'd)

answered said to bring Kelly in. Susie kindly agreed to take us to the doctor's office.

When we arrived we were called back to see the doctor in just a matter of minutes. Several doctors were brought in to examine her & then they took her to another room. I was told to wait. Finally, her doctor, Dr. James, came in to talk to me. He told me he was quite sure Kelly had a very rare disease called Meningococemia. He explained this as an infection of the blood stream. Treatment of this disease must begin immediately as death can occur in just a matter of hours. She was given penicillin & other antibiotics while we waited for an ambulance to take her to Children's Hospital.

I called my husband Lou from the Emergency Room. He left work immediately & came straight to the hospital. Just as he arrived, a team of doctors & nurses ran out of the Emergency Room, transporting our daughter on a stretcher. In a panic, we hurried after them & were told of the urgency to get her to the Intensive Care Unit. The head doctor in ICU told us the purple areas covering her body were caused by tiny ruptured blood vessels. He further explained the disease & said, in short, that Kelly was as sick as she possibly could be. We were told that she was then stable & if any further complications were to develop, it would probably be within 48 hours.

After 45 hours we felt very sure that the worst was over. Then we saw the doctor walking toward us & the look on his face told us something was dreadfully wrong. He told us Kelly's heart had overworked itself trying to pump blood through the tiny veins & was now quite enlarged. We were allowed to be with her for only a few minutes & then returned to the waiting room. An overwhelming feeling of helplessness engulfed us to a depth I cannot explain.

The waiting was utterly maddening & my husband & I were certainly feeling the strain.

A few hours later the doctor approached us once again & revealed still more bad news. Kelly was now semi-comatose. She was not responding to any type of stimulus. Her body was functioning but she would not wake up. Because of the lack of circulation to her extremities, Kelly's fingers & toes had been deteriorating each day. The doctors feared this might be occurring to her brain & internal organs. There was little else the doctors could do; we could only pray for a miracle.

We had to wait four-hour intervals to be allowed fifteen minutes with her. Each time there was no change in her.

On the 12th of October, Kelly's first birthday, a miracle did happen. Kelly opened her eyes & looked around! At that moment she began a new life.

Each day she gradually became better, until she was well enough to undergo a series of skin grafts & amputations. The amputations



were an extremely upsetting thing to accept, but the grace of God gave us the understanding to accept what we could not change. Our daughter would live & her brain scans showed no sign of abnormal disturbance. But

she would have to endure the agony of many painful operations, & her strength became our strength. To look at our beautiful, innocent daughter & all she had endured, & still she smiled at us God had truly touched her.

She was released from the hospital on December 23, 1980. The amputations had left Kelly with no fingers on her left hand & four fingers ended at their joints on her right hand. (Strangely, her right thumb was left intact. Could this be because she sucked that thumb?) The doctors also removed the tip of her nose, her left foot to the ankle, & the toes, heel, & sole of her right foot, leaving her a

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10 Tips to Improve Your Prosthetic Outcome (cont'd)

standing and walking around in your prosthesis as much as possible. Blood circulation in the lower limbs is often compromised in the case of diabetics; by moving around on your prosthesis, you are helping to promote increased circulation.

7. If you are a dialysis patient, understand that the volume of your residual limb will fluctuate from day to day and you will have to manage your socket fit by using socks. Typically, you'll need more socks right after dialysis and then fewer socks as you approach your next session. Also, if you take diuretics, do not skip your medication, as this will also affect your limb volume and socket fit.
8. Sock-ply management is critical for lower-limb amputees. It's natural for your residual limb to change size and shape following your amputation and you can use different sock-ply configurations to help maintain a good socket fit. Combinations of full-length and/or partial length socks may be required to maintain optimal fit. You need to experiment and be willing to make sock adjustments multiple times a day if necessary. Try to maintain consistent body weight, as this can help to maintain comfortable socket fit. However, if, for example, after being fit with your prosthesis, you become more active, resulting in weight loss, that's not a bad thing. Just be sure to stay in touch with your PCP and prosthetist in the event you need a smaller socket.
9. Liners don't last forever. They can wear out in spots, causing the gel to thin and become less protective, leading to possible skin breakdown. Typically, insurance will cover the expense of two new liners every 12 months. If you are a diabetic, seriously consider making dramatic lifestyle changes (diet and exercise), under the oversight of your PCP, to reduce your dependency on multiple medications that can have adverse long-term effects on your body.

You should strive to be active, standing and walking around in your prosthesis as much as possible.

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## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Unscramble these words & use the letters in parentheses to make a very special word. You can find the answer in the middle of PAGE 7.



POMSSCTEOAAIN    \_ \_ ( ) \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
ODDTVEE            \_ \_ \_ ( ) \_ \_ \_  
VIESSTNEI          \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ( ) \_ \_ \_  
FTLHOUTGUH        \_ ( ) \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
LLPHFEU            \_ ( ) \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
GTRRUUNNI          \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ( ) \_ \_ \_

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"I just inherited her sense of resilience and hopefulness and enthusiasm for life - that no matter what happened to you, you couldn't maybe control that, but what you could try to control was how you responded to it."

– by Hillary Clinton, speaking about her mother

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## A New Beginning (cont'd)

round, doll-shaped foot, which has continued to be an irritating nuisance to her.

She received her first prosthesis (artificial leg) just three months after her release from the hospital. With a little physical therapy, she would walk on her own in another 3 months.

By the time her second birthday arrived, Kelly was acting like a normal two-year-old. She no longer required the heart medicine that the doctors anticipated she would need for many years to regulate her heart.



Today Kelly is eight years old. She has undergone quite a series of operations to remove the deeply imbedded scars that crisscross her arms & legs. Kelly has overcome her physical handicap & is presently in her second year of ballet.

*(Kelly's Dad Lou is a 3<sup>rd</sup> Shift Body Shop Employee)*

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How I Raised An Amputee

— by Lisa Grey

Being a young mother and having a one-year-old that is a new amputee was frightening and challenging at the same time. What do I do, how do I start, where do I go for help? I started with her plastic surgeon and he told me pretty much all that I needed to know: treat her as normal as possible. How do I do that when I want to do everything for her? I take it one day at a time and let her teach me. She didn't know she had anything wrong with her. "I" was the one who saw her differently. Boy, did she ever teach me something! The first day she got her new prosthesis and went to physical therapy, she never looked back. Onward and upward was her goal even at such a young age. I watched her overcome pretty much every obstacle she encountered, and each one made her stronger and more determined than ever. On the days when she felt defeated, I would sit down with her and we would both have a good cry and then I would tell her: "If I could change everything, I would. But I can't, so we have to play the cards we've been dealt and learn to take each day at a time." I told her that I would be with her every step of her life to help her any way that I can.



Now that she is an adult, I continue to be there for her when she needs me, even if it's just a phone call to say she needs to hear my voice. Sometimes that's all any of us needs is a voice to tell us we can do it. She continues to teach me how to deal with challenges in life and I hope that I am still teaching her. I don't think a mother ever stops teaching her children.

I questioned her decision when she decided to have her legs amputated a second time at the age of 30 and I listened and supported her when she explained why. I held her in my arms when she cried in pain and reassured her that she made the right decision and that the pain would be temporary.



I watch with pride as I see her raising her children and instilling in them the values that I taught her. She continues to inspire me and I look at her in amazement when I see how well she's handled life. I love the look on her face when I see her lovingly look into her children's eyes and I know that she understands the pain I felt as a young mother. But I also hope she knows that just like her wounds have healed and made her stronger, my pain has also healed and

she has made me stronger.



SPOTLIGHT

— by Belinda

This month our spotlight will cast a large light. We want it to cover all the mothers, step-mothers, grandmothers, and aunts who are members of *MOVING FORWARD*, whether they are amputees or caregivers. I believe that Mother's Day should be about honoring all women who have made a difference in the life of a child.

One of the fears that come with limb loss is that we will lose our ability to be the type of parent/grandparent/aunt that we have been in the past or that we would like to be in the future. Although sometimes our physical capabilities may be more limited, we are uniquely qualified to teach our children some very valuable life lessons. Who better to teach them that when faced with life challenges, to not give up, but to find a way to endure? We can also teach them the importance of setting attainable goals and then striving to reach them. We can show them that it is okay to look different than others, because what is truly important is who we are on the inside. We can show them how to keep their head held high and to be proud of themselves when faced with unkind comments or actions by others. We can teach them the importance of accepting and loving themselves. We can teach them to appreciate the small things in life and to take the time to enjoy them. For those of you who are caregivers, you are teaching the children one of the most important life lessons, and that is sometimes in life we must put someone else's needs before our own.

We would like to honor all the women of *MOVING FORWARD* and to thank them for being positive role models in the lives of our children.

*Happy Mother's Day from
Belinda, Deklan, & Carter
Jacobi*



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## I'm Moving Forward . . .

Each month we are including a picture of our members **moving forward** after limb loss.



Group members *moving forward* and "Showing Their Mettle"

\*\* If you would like to submit a picture of you **moving forward**, send it to Belinda or Julie. \*\*

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RECAP OF APRIL

MOVING FORWARD Limb Loss Support Group "showed its mettle" during the month of April. We started by making a donation of \$100.00 to the Amputee Coalition to go toward their Children's Summer Camp Program. We held a chili pot raffle at our March Chili Supper with the proceeds to be donated to the camp. The Paddy Rossbach Youth Camp is open to children 10 - 17 years of age who have limb loss or limb difference. The camp is held each summer at Camp Joy in Clarksville, Ohio. We are proud to be able to help support this wonderful opportunity for the children.

On April 20th, we held our IN meeting at SIRH. We welcomed new members Jackie Cartwright and Lori Lindsey. After announcements and introductions, an open discussion was held on many topics. We ended with ideas for future meetings and events. The group had a wonderful time getting to know and learning from each other.

The April 25th meeting coincided with "Show Your Mettle Day". The group used Skype for the first time at this meeting. We had a special guest, Jeff Huber, who spoke to us from San Francisco, California. Jeff gave a very motivational and informational presentation. He told of growing up with limb difference and the challenges that he and his parents faced. Jeff is now owner of a company, Standard Cyborg, which makes prosthetic devices using 3D technology. He is currently marketing a waterproof leg that can be worn in the shower or on the beach. Jeff will be talking by Skype at our IN meeting sometime in the next few months. We look forward to hearing from him again and keeping up with his progress in making low-cost prosthetic limbs. The group welcomed Bill Titus along with several of his family members, and also newcomers Ruth



Robins & Rhonda Campbell. Special anniversary wishes were given to Valerie & Ron Cardwell, who were celebrating their 34th anniversary that day. We also welcomed back Gary and Karen Rock and congratulated them on their marriage.

Following the meeting, the fun continued with a dinner at O'Charleys Restaurant. We enjoyed great food, conversation, and laughter.



The month of April came to an end with a picnic and viewing of the Derby Festival Pegasus Parade. We want to thank Louisville Prosthetics for hosting this event once again for the group. Despite the quick change in the weather conditions, we had a wonderful

time visiting with friends and watching the parade.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Meetings:

IN Meeting – Mon., May 18th, at Southern IN Rehab Hospital, 3104 Blackiston Blvd., New Albany. In conjunction with Stroke Awareness Month, we will be discussing the warning signs, risk factors, treatments for and rehabilitation following a stroke. There will also be open discussion time.

KY Meeting – Sat., May 23rd, at Baptist Hospital East, 4000 Kresge Way, Louisville, in Room 2B in the Education Center. We will also be having our stroke awareness presentation at this meeting along with open discussion time and planning future events.

We encourage you to attend either or both meetings. As part of our mission statement, we, at **MOVING FORWARD**, work to inform and educate the amputees in our area about important health issues. According to the National Stroke Association, people with diabetes are four times more likely to suffer a stroke than people who do not have diabetes. Therefore, we feel it is imperative that we share this valuable information with our members.

Events:

Running Clinic – Wed., May 27th, from 10am-7pm at the Jewish Community Center (JCC), 3600 Dutchman's Lane, Louisville KY. Stop by anything during those times. Sponsored by Kentucky Prosthetics & Otto Bock. Anyone who is interested in learning to run with a prosthesis or new technology in running prosthetics is encouraged to attend. Lunch & dinner will be provided with RSVP by Friday, May 22nd, if you plan to be there during lunch or dinner time. RSVP to Sienna Newman at 502-585-4228 or sgnewman77@gmail.com. For more info, contact Matt or Sienna at 502-585-4228.

Amputee Tournament Players Golf Championship – Fri. - Sun., June 5th - 7th, at Shelbyville Country Club, Shelbyville, KY. On Fri. there will be a sponsor/amputee golf scramble and on Sat. & Sun. the tournament will be held featuring the top amputee golfers from around the country. For more info, you can visit our website or Facebook page or call Sienna Newman at 502-585-4228. Members from our group are encouraged to participate in the golf scramble or to volunteer to help during the event. As for volunteering at the tournament, Sienna says that the day we need the most help is on Friday June 5th from 10am till 6pm. We can use volunteers for as long or short as they would like to help, but the main time frames are 1:00 - 5:00pm. If you would like to volunteer for any or all of the events, please contact Belinda, Julie, or Kelly (contact info is on the back page of the newsletter).

Walking Clinic – Sat., June 13th, Kenney Orthopedics will be holding a Walking Clinic in Lexington, followed by Military Appreciation Night at Lexington Legends at Whitaker Bank Ball Park. **MOVING FORWARD** has been invited to attend both events. Members of the Wounded Warriors will be participating in a softball game that evening.

Louisville Bats Game – During the month of June, **MOVING FORWARD** will be attending a Louisville Bats Game at Slugger Field. More info and ticket prices will be announced at the May meetings and in the June newsletter.

3rd Annual Pie & Ice Cream Social – in July. We will list the date in next month's newsletter. If you have a musical talent that you would like to share with the group at the social, please contact us.

We will be sharing more details of these events as they become available.

Lots of other fun activities are being planned, so stay tuned :)

Excerpt from Belinda's "Show Your Mettle Day" Speech at Meeting

Showing your mettle means showing your courage and determination in the face of difficult situations. Everyone here has done that individually, but when you think about it, we have also done it as a group. At times, it would have seemed easier to just give up; especially when we had so little attendance at meetings, or when we were faced with having to do all the paperwork involved in becoming a not-for-profit organization, or when we had to prove ourselves to everyone that we were in

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Excerpt From Belinda's "Show Your Mettle Day" Speech at Meeting (cont'd)

this for the right reason, and that was to provide support and information to **ALL** amputees in our community. We have stuck it out for over 2 1/2 years now. We have made new friendships, we have supported each other, we have learned from each other, and we have worked together to build **MOVING FORWARD** into something of which I believe we can all feel proud to be a part. I would like to share these numbers with you. We now have 59 registered members. Our newsletter goes out to a total of 157 individuals and businesses, 118 by email and 39 by mail. We have 98 people on our Facebook page (from 22 different states and 4 other countries). We are now holding meetings in 2 locations each month. We have taken part in health fairs, have given a presentation at a local college, distributed Care Packages to the VA and Kosair Children's Hospitals. We are being contacted by health care professionals and the Amputee Coalition asking us to go on peer visits to new amputees. By adding the use of Skype to our meetings, we are going to be able to communicate with amputees from all over the country. So yes, **MOVING FORWARD** has and will continue to "Show Our Mettle."

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## Q & A

- by Belinda

Our Q&A section is provided so that our readers can submit a "?", and then I, in turn, ask some of the members of the group for a response. From time to time, I also do some research from various informational sources so that I can better respond to the submitted question. I am not trying to provide medical advice, but just trying to help amputees who are in search of some answers. As always, I encourage you to talk to your family doctor, specialist, or prosthetist about your concerns.

### Do not be afraid to ask them questions!

In this Q&A, I will finish up the answers to the questions presented in the March issue. Those questions dealt with prosthetic feet. In March, the types of prosthetic feet were discussed, including how they worked and who would benefit from their use. In April, the topic was K-levels and told how they were used to determine what type of prosthetic devices that Medicare or your insurance would cover. In this issue we will discuss some of the prosthetic feet on the market today, the companies that make them, and give a little feedback from some of the members on their choices in feet.

Let me start off by encouraging you to do some research on your own. You can find unlimited information on the internet by just typing in **prosthetic feet** in the search box. Another great way to get information is by magazines. There are 2 excellent magazines available now at no cost for amputees. They are [inMotion](#), which is distributed by the Amputee Coalition, and [Amplitude](#), distributed by the Amplitude Media Group. Both magazines are sent out bi-monthly and are full of useful information and advertisements from the various prosthetic companies. If you want information on how to receive these free magazines, please contact us. Once you have found a prosthetic foot that you are interested in, talk to your prosthetist about it.

Take the information in, so that he/she can see it. With all the new products being developed today, it would be impossible for anyone to have knowledge of them all. When you have the discussion on choosing a foot with your prosthetist, tell them not only what you are doing now, but what you hope to be able to do

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## LET'S GET MOVING! - by Belinda

During the next few months, we will be featuring activities in this section. The weather is warming up, and after being cooped up all winter, it's time to get outside and enjoy ourselves. With the Amputee Golf Tournament coming to Louisville in June, we are including the following article from the Amputee Coalition on tips for playing golf. To read the article in its entirety, visit the resource center on their website.

*inMotion* • Volume 24, Issue 3 May | June 2014

## GOLF The Perfect Rehabilitation Therapy

- by Robert S. Gailey, PT, PhD

Golf is one of the most popular sports enjoyed by amputees of all ages. It encourages people to get outside, compete within their comfort level, & enjoy social exchange. It's one of the best activities for improving balance, coordination, range of motion, strength, & endurance.

**Putting** | There are many aspects to putting, from stance to club selection. For the purpose of this exercise, the classic pendulum-type stroke has been selected.

**Stance** | Set up with a comfortable, wide stance; bend your knees slightly, as if you were going to sit. For transfemoral amputees, the prosthetic knee is straight with the sound limb slightly flexed, if possible. Feel the weight over the center of your feet, with a little more weight on the front foot. You should feel secure and balanced over both feet. Your upper arms should rest lightly on your ribs, and your forward eye should be directly over the ball.

**Stroke** | Your hands, arms and shoulders all work together, creating a pendulum-type stroke. Your shoulders and arms create a triangle that moves an equal distance on both the backswing and the through swing, with the head remaining still at all times.

**Prosthetic Foot** | You should feel the points of the heel, little toe and great toe on the prosthetic foot. This will help balance the weight over the foot. Start with equal weight distribution between both feet, then move the weight slightly toward the forward foot.

**Chipping and Pitching** | Getting on the green and close to the hole can reduce your score dramatically. Chipping and pitching is all about balance and repeating the same stance and stroke consistently.

**Stance** | Use a narrow, open stance, with your feet positioned fairly close together. The forward foot is slightly back, and your body is aligned slightly left of the target. The ball is positioned back toward your back foot with a fair amount of weight on your forward side. Knees are slightly flexed with your back straight and rear end out a little.

**Stroke** | Your hands move ahead of the ball, wrists firm (no bending), with your weight moving toward the forward leg. The distance of the backswing and through swing dictates the distance you want the ball to go. Both movements are usually equal in distance. A short chip requires only a short back and through swing; whereas, if you want the ball to fly farther, a more complete stroke is required, along with a little wider base with your feet.

**Prosthetic Foot** | Getting the weight down into the prosthetic foot is essential for consistently successful chipping and pitching. A prosthetic foot that permits vertical and rotational shock absorption can make this stroke smoother and more comfortable, especially when the prosthetic limb is forward.

### Full Swing

**Stance** | Feet should be shoulder width apart and turned outward slightly. Bend your knees slightly until you feel your weight over the center of your feet. Transfemoral amputees will need to keep their prosthetic knee straight; as a result, the sound knee will be straighter as well. Stick your rear end

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## Q & A (cont'd)

in the future.

I was really surprised when I started asking amputees for this article what type of foot they wear. Almost all of them said that they had no idea, and that it was just the foot that their prosthetist ordered for them. If I would have asked these same amputees what type of athletic shoe they were wearing, they would have said Nike or Adidas or whatever other brand. This is where I will borrow from our speaker at our last meeting, Jeff Huber, and say that we, as amputees, need to take ownership of our prostheses. If you are able to do everything that you want to do comfortably with your current prosthesis, then that's great, but if not, maybe it's time to do some research and make an appointment with your prosthetist. I guarantee you that they will not be offended, but they will be glad that you want to increase your activity level and get back to doing the things that you once enjoyed.

My own experience with prosthetic feet began, as with many amputees, with a Sach foot and a pin-lock suspension system. I remember the first time my husband and I took our grandson to the playground. I was very disappointed when I ended up having to sit on a bench and watch them play. The playground area was covered with a thick coat of mulch, and I couldn't keep up with them. The foot was great for walking indoors, but I was soon ready to do much more than that. Currently, I am very lucky to have two prosthetic legs. One is what I call my "everyday" leg and it consists of a Trias foot and a Limb Logic Vacuum Suspension System. The other I call my "sports" leg and it has an Echelon foot and a Harmony Vacuum Suspension System. The Trias foot is lightweight, fits easily into my dress shoes for work, and is good for moderate activity levels. For me this works because a lot of times I will go straight from work to a ballgame or go out to dinner and then on a walk, so I can do that comfortably. The Echelon foot is heavier, but comes with a hydraulic ankle and is great for hiking or playing baseball with my grandsons. I am pleased with both feet, but when it comes time to purchase a new foot, I will do my homework. Prosthetic technology is rapidly changing. I recently saw some information about a new prosthetic foot that has a camera that scans the ground in front of the amputee and automatically adapts to the surface. There are many great feet on the market today. Most manufacturers have a 60 to 90 day trial period, so if you do try their foot and are not pleased with it, you can return it. This is important, because these feet are very expensive and insurance companies vary as to how many years must pass before they will pay for another one.

There is one final point that I would like to make before I share with you a statement from another member about his foot choice. A new prosthetic foot can make a world of difference in your mobility level, **but** you must first have a good fitting and properly aligned socket. You also must work with your physical therapist and then continue working on your own to strengthen your muscles and improve your gait. I encourage you to have regular checkups with your prosthetist just as you do with your family doctor. Your prosthetist will be able to tell you what your next step should be in order to keep *moving forward*.

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– by Mike Portman

How do you describe something that makes a fundamental change in your day-to-day experience? That was my first thought to write an info piece on the Ability Dynamics Rush Foot.

My first foot, like nearly all lower limb amputees, was fairly stiff and unresponsive. But then everything has a purpose. First, you have to get familiar with the fact that

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LET'S GET MOVING! (cont'd)

out a little, keeping your lower back straight and your chin up.

Strokes |

- Backswing – Make a smooth, one-piece turn, moving the club, hands, arms, chest and shoulders together, sweeping the club head back low with a full, wide swing. Keep the weight on the inside of your back foot with your front foot firmly on the ground.
- Downswing – The lower body initiates the movement as the body unwinds, and the hands remain soft as the club head moves through the ball. Your body weight shifts smoothly from the rear foot to the front foot. Your body must be encouraged to rotate all the way through the shot, with the majority of the weight finishing over the front leg.

Prosthetic Foot | As the magnitude of your swing increases, the need to have a sense of where your prosthetic foot is increases. The more you can feel where your weight is distributed over the prosthetic foot, the better your balance and swing control. Also, the greater the forces that are generated throughout the prosthesis, the more a shock absorber or torsion-control device will reduce the forces and permit greater motion and comfort.

Benefits – With practice, not only will your game improve, you will improve weight shifting, stability and balance over the prosthetic limb in various positions. The strength in your legs, as well as your overall balance, will increase, especially as you take bigger swings.

So come on everyone . . . LET'S GET MOVING!!

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## AWARENESS MONTHS FOR MAY

**NEUROPATHY AWARENESS WEEK** – 2nd full week of May  
**MOVING FORWARD** members will be distributing Take a Seat and Check Your Feet brochures provided by the Amputee Coalition during the month of May. We would like to share this information with you from the American Diabetes Association <http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/complications/neuropathy/steps-to-prevent-or-delay.html>

For more info on neuropathy visit these websites: diabetes.org and neuropathy.org

**MAY IS NATIONAL STROKE AWARENESS MONTH** – For more information from the National Stroke Association, go to their website at stroke.org.

*Use FAST To Remember The Warning Signs Of A Stroke:*

- F FACE:** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?
- A ARMS:** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
- S SPEECH:** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?
- T TIME:** If you observe any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately.

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REMINDER TO SIGN UP FOR KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM

NPO #15533 – This is a way to contribute to *MOVING FORWARD*. It does not take away from your Kroger points in any way but our support group receives a percentage of your purchases. Don't forget to register online, if you have not done so, at: krogercommunityrewards.com

Q & A (cont'd)

you have a prosthetic foot and develop a stable relationship with wearing the prosthetic. Then, as you progress, move to more flexible feet that open up your ability as well as your comfort level.

After five years as an amputee, I had gone through three different feet, usually replacing them with the manufacture of a new leg. I say usually, due to also having suffered what is known as a "catastrophic failure", which is breaking the foot. Then, while attending the Amputee Coalition National Conference, I sat in on a presentation by Ability Dynamic, developer of the Rush Foot, on the capabilities of the foot and how it was produced.

The Rush Foot is made with Flexeon™, a glass composite that was in use in the aerospace industry. The foot has no bolts or screws, other than those used to connect it to the pylon (leg). I have found that the foot is indeed flexible and comfortable to walk in, allowing me to go up and down inclines without having to "crab walk".

Now this does not mean that it is for everyone, I found it to be the foot for me, but others that have used the foot did not care for it. But if you discuss this with your prosthetic provider, you can work with him or her to see if it might be right for you.

If you are interested in more information regarding the Rush Foot and have access to the internet, visit Ability Dynamic's website at <http://www.rushfoot.com>.

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## Krafty Kids .... by Beverly

This is a fun art activity that could be used as a Mother's Day gift:

### FINGER PRINT FLOWER

#### Supplies:

- Cardstock
- Paint
- Toothpick

- 1) Press finger into paint and use fingerprint to make a "flower" shape.
- 2) Use a toothpick (or a thin paintbrush) dipped in green paint to add stems and leaves.

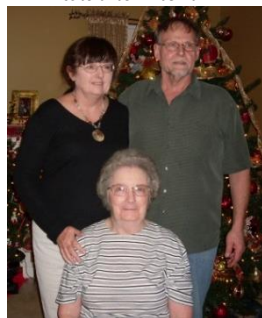
Each is a unique creation!



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Happy Mother's Day!

Belinda & Shelton
with her mom



Julie's mom
with Philip



Beverly with her mom



... from Beverly's Kitchen

Here's a delicious dessert to have on Mother's Day. This has been one of my favorite desserts that my mom has fixed on special family gatherings.

"PIG LICKING" CAKE

INGREDIENTS

CAKE:

- 1 Box Yellow Cake Mix
 - 1 - 11 oz. Can Mandarin Oranges
 - 1/2 Cup Oil
 - 4 Eggs
- Mix ingredients and pour in 3 (8 or 9") pans.
Bake for 15-20 minutes at 350 degrees. Let Cool.

ICING:

- 9 oz. Lite Cool Whip
 - 1 Small Can Sugar-Free Crushed Pineapples
 - 1 Small Box Vanilla Instant Pudding
- Fold the ingredients together and spread between each layer, sides and on the top.

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## CONTACT INFO

Call for meeting times & locations!

MOVING FORWARD Support Group

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~~~~~

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE ANSWER (from Page 2)

COMPASSIONATE	<u>M</u>
DEVOTED	<u>O</u>
SENSITIVE	<u>T</u>
THOUGHTFUL	<u>H</u>
HELPFUL	<u>E</u>
NURTURING	<u>R</u>

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\*\* We want to thank the Amputee Coalition for allowing us to use their articles in our newsletter. We also want to thank them for the many brochures and publications that they provide to our group. The Amputee Coalition does not endorse any sponsor, manufacturer, or prosthetic device mentioned in this newsletter. \*\*

This past month we began talking to the various prosthetic offices in our area and asking them to become sponsors for our newsletter. In order to allow us to continue mailing the newsletter to those who do not have internet service, we asked them to contribute to help us to offset the cost of printing and mailing. We were honored when they agreed, and we are thankful for their continued support of **MOVING FORWARD** Limb Loss Support Group.



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