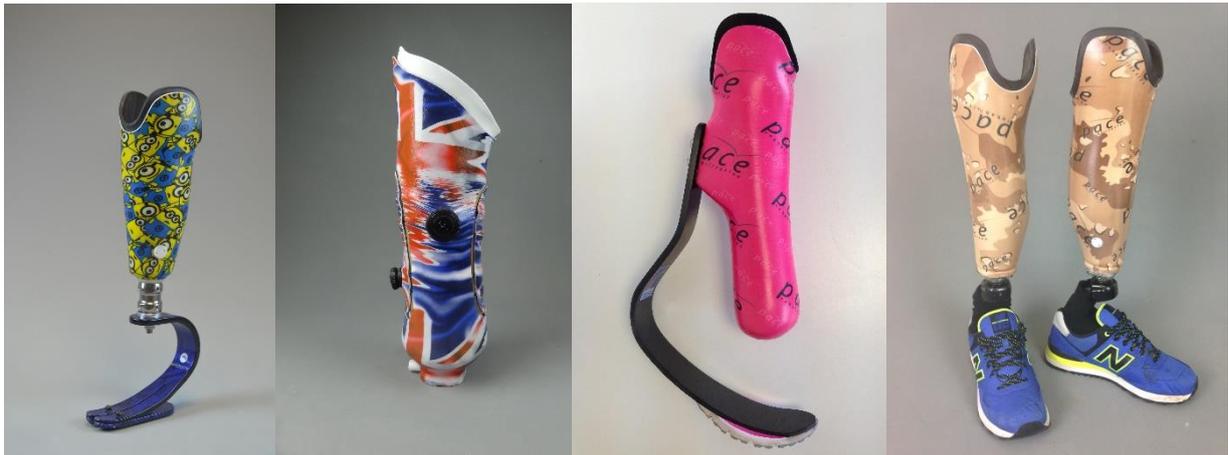


Patient Services - Personalising Prosthetics

Thanks in part to increased media exposure, amputees are now often proud to show off their prosthetic devices and regularly want to personalise them with a funky appearance.



As prosthetist Howard Woolley explains, “Shaping prosthesis with foam and covering with a stocking is one option for finishing a prosthesis, but there are some exciting alternatives which many people are exploring.”

Prosthetic manufacturers have reacted to this patient demand, with companies such as Ottobock and Ossur providing their own solutions to protect and aesthetically cover their sophisticated Genium and Rheo knees respectively.

Independent companies are also producing some stunning and innovative solutions. A cover can also provide a discrete and functional solution to restoring the user’s body shape, enabling clothing to hang more naturally over a prosthesis. One such example is the 3D printed [UNYQ](#) cosmetic covers (pictured right, available through Pace).



Another popular solution to personalise a prosthesis is to incorporate a material design or pattern into the final stages when manufacturing the socket. This typically suits a pin lock or seal-in suspension system, where the prosthetic socket is not obscured by a suspension sleeve.

As Howard explains, “Having achieved comfort and function for the patient, they will often ask us to incorporate a design of how they want their prosthesis to finally look. Their idea can be on a scrap of paper, something they have seen on the internet, or more simply reflect their football team or pastime.”

Howard added, “Not everything is achievable, but by using processes such as hydro coating or laminating in a material design, we can provide a prosthesis with a finish and appearance that they are proud to wear and show off.”

The effects of personalising a prosthetic can go beyond the aesthetics, as Pace Specialist Counsellor Sue Turner explains, “The psychological effect of amputation can be profound and long lasting for some and challenging for others. The benefits of incorporating some personalisation should not be underestimated. It not only gives the user a greater sense of participation in their prosthetic manufacture, it can also be an aid to acceptance”.



Sue adds, “By putting a little of themselves into the prosthesis, the whole dynamic changes. A young patient recently told me that knowing his personalised leg looked so cool gave his confidence a much needed boost.”

Ultimately, a clinician is endeavouring to deliver a functional prosthesis. Often patient satisfaction can be enhanced by personalising a prosthesis, so the team at Pace are always happy to try to accommodate potential personalised options with their patients.