

Below Elbow (BE) Prostheses

There are many types of below elbow prostheses. The type that an amputee is fit with depends on the shape of the residual limb, the length of the residual limb, activity level, prognosis, and individual preference. Each prosthesis is custom made to the person that it is being fit to.

A BE prosthesis can be made for different purposes depending on the wearer. A cosmetic, or passive, prosthesis is used primarily to replace the body part that is missing. This promotes a healthy body image, but is also functional in that it can assist the sound side arm in activities such as holding or placing objects.

A body powered, or conventional, prosthesis uses body movements to operate the terminal device (hand or hook). The prosthesis is connected to the body through the use of cables and a harness. By movements of the shoulders and the arms, the person can open and close the terminal device.

A myoelectric prosthesis uses muscles of the affected arm to control the opening and closing of the terminal device. Electrodes are fit within the prosthesis. By contracting the muscles of the arm which formerly controlled the opening and closing of an anatomical hand, electrical outputs are sent to a motor that open and close an artificial hand.

See the following for more details on the various types of below elbow prostheses:

- [Cosmetic Prosthesis](#)
- [Body Powered Prosthesis](#)
- [Myoelectric Prosthesis](#)

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