

# **Psychological and Functional Benefits of ARTech Amputee Restorations**

It does not take a major effort of the imagination to understand that the loss of a limb, nose or ear causes deep emotional trauma. Apart from the obvious difficulties with mobility and self-care, the disturbance in body image requires significant emotional readjustment. In fact, the grief reaction following the loss of a limb, nose or ear has been very convincingly compared with that following the loss of a spouse. However, the loss of a limb never diminishes with time.

Traditional prostheses have been fabricated primarily to restore motor function with little emphasis on aesthetic appearance. In today's socially oriented society, the traditional artificial look of the prosthesis is not acceptable. This is especially true for those in public positions such as salespersons, physicians, lawyers, office workers, bank tellers, teachers, and secretaries, just to name a few. With all the suffering already endured, it can be devastating to receive the cruel stares and often-unintentional comments which can destroy the amputee's confidence.

The first objective of the aesthetic prosthesis is to restore the appearance of the injured area sufficiently to eliminate, to a high degree, the stigma associated with the disfigurement. But ARTech silicone restorations are also functional. Feet can improve gait and posture, ease lower back pain, relieve pressure on bone spurs and other sensitive areas, and protect the tissue from further injury.

By promoting the use of an injured limb (which the amputee may consider too repulsive to expose and use) the aesthetic prosthesis may well be an absolute requirement for overall function. When the restoration has a natural appearance, as opposed to the robotic or mannequin look of traditional prostheses, utilization by the patient is maximized. This enhanced usability may well be one of the most important functions of all.

ARTech Laboratory uses several different types of high grade medical silicone in the fabrication of the prosthesis. The durometer is determined by both the type of limb loss and the sensitivity or functional needs of the patient.

Longevity of the prosthesis is determined mainly by the care and maintenance of the patient. The best life time estimate is from two to five years. We have models still in service after ten years, while some are worn out after one year. We strongly recommend that the prostheses is returned to us before the one year warranty has expired so it can refurbished. Repairs are billed at a reasonable hourly rate after the warranty expires. Regular maintenance will significantly prolong the life of the prosthesis. These prosthesis become a part of the patient and they are reluctant to do without them for the time necessary to repair them. However, there is a point if they wait too long and the damage is significant, when we can no longer restore the prosthesis to an acceptable appearance.