

Important Tips

Creating a prosthesis long distance without seeing the patient has always been difficult. Regardless, we want to provide the best possible product for your patient - the first time. We will continue trying to improve the process. In order to do this, accurate information is critical.

We understand the convenience and ease of using the two part silicone impression materials. However, we have had many more re-makes for fitting issues since this has become widely used. There are some precautions that can help keep these impressions accurate.

When we receive silicone models, if no measurements are filled in on our Work Order, we have no way of knowing if the models are accurate or not. The silicone models tend to expand when poured with stone. Unfortunately, the practitioner does not know whether they are accurate or not if they are not poured with stone and compared to the patient while in the office. We reduce the size of the models as part of our process in order to achieve an intimate fit that will not be too loose. Please do not reduce the models before sending them to us. If the models are not accurate, this results in having to remake the prosthesis, sometimes starting over with new impressions. This is costly to us and irritating to both you and your patients. It may be necessary to charge an additional fee if a remake is due to inaccurate models.

Use Vaseline or some other type separator lubricant over the skin on areas that will be covered with the silicone. This helps in removal of the silicone without distorting the detail. The silicone needs to be at least ¼ inch thick all the way around, especially on the wrist and arm. Don't remove the silicone until it is fully cured, approximately 20 minutes at least. Wrap the silicone in plaster bandage, being careful not to collapse or distort the impression. Having this protective shell will protect it from collapsing during transit and help keep the proper shape when we pour it in stone.

For "fingers" we need the impressions taken at least through mid-palm, although the total hand would be best, (both the sound side and the affected side), with the fingers held in the position that they want them sculpted. The extra length is needed for fixation in our molds. This is most important when the patient has a long residual digit

which may not allow for a wire insert for pose-ability. If the prosthesis is for a thumb then we will need an impression of the total hand, 2-3 inches past the wrist in the event that a strap needs to go around the palm for retention. The thumb on both the sound and affected sides (if possible) need to be in the “opposition position” if they want to use the thumb for opposition when holding things. **The silicone must be ¼ inch thick all the way around in order to prevent collapsing in transit and distortion when poured with stone.**

We sculpt over the impression of the “affected side”, so this is critical especially for a thumb since the skin on the palm and around the thumb base is not smooth. This is also true for situations where the thumb remains and other digits are missing. **Function vs cosmetics should be a conversation between practitioner and patient. This will determine the flex, trim line and position of fingers.** After some reduction in size, we sculpt a mirror image of the “sound” side right over the residual model of the “affected” side that we receive from you. **Both the “sound” side and the “affected” side should be held in the desired position while impressions are being made,** whether in alginate or with silicone. It sounds easy to request that the flex of a finger be adjusted a few degrees, but this entails quite a detailed process for us – and modifications require some degree “guess work”, which can translate into the prosthesis not fitting as well as we would like. Changing the flex requires four different process and is quite time consuming.

Alginate impressions (in the weight bearing position – both sound and affected sides) are best for feet. **Plaster bandage models do not give accurate measurements, nor is there any detail for sculpting.** If soft cloth is inside the plaster bandage, then they are totally un-useable. **Likewise for foam box impressions.** We need the impressions taken 3-4 inches above the ankle, again for fixation in our mold. **We offer “semi-custom” feet as a service for people who have Medicare and Medicaid. We provide this service at a “break-even” price.** For this reason, we cannot remake a “semi-custom” foot for color alone. Please complete the color choice section on our Work Order. We will match that color with adjustments made from any color-true photos (taken on our background sheet) we receive. Please take into consideration when the photos are taken (summer, winter) when choosing the color numbers. We recommend a color that will blend for both seasons.

When using alginate for impressions we've found that the thicker you make the mixture (like oatmeal, only pour-able), the better impression you get. Don't use a drill or whisk to mix the alginate. It will create air bubbles on the surface of the stone models. Stir with a spatula.

We put a lot of thought into the information requested on our new "specific" Work Orders. The information requested is very beneficial to us in the fabrication of the prosthesis. It should eliminate some of the guess work we've been doing in the past.

It is our attempt to give you the best prosthesis "the first time" without having to return it for fitting or color issues. That is frustrating for you, your patient and us.

Impressions need to be longer than just the area being restored. This allows us the extra length needed for fixation in our molds. Impressions for **hands and partial hands** need to be as long as the patient wants the trim line to be, plus 3-4 inches for fixation. The wrist needs to be held straight and not bent from side to side or backwards or forwards. If we must make the alterations, it is just guess-work as to the correct size and shape.

For BE & AE sockets and BK and AK sockets, it is important to note that we cover what you send to us. Please check wrist size and shape (oval, round) and ankle size. We have a lot of remakes because the shape and size are too large or too small.

Myos (I-Limbs, B-bionic, Michaelangelo, etc.)

If the device is not sent to us along with the impressions, please include photos, which show the tips of the fingers and the sensor location.

Most of this information is on the Checklist, which is available on-line. Or email us and we will get it to you quickly.