

Information about ...

# **Driving after lower limb amputation**

**WestMARC**

West of Scotland Mobility and Rehabilitation Service

## 1. I want to return to driving, what do I need to be aware of?

Driving after amputation involves changing your driving habits. You need to make sure you are capable of safely controlling your vehicle. We advise you to contact your GP to discuss the possibility of you returning to drive.

It is an offence (Road Traffic Act 1991) to drive a motor vehicle on a road whilst not in proper control of that vehicle.

For specialist advice, we always recommend that you contact the **Scottish Driving Assessment Service**, Astley Ainslie Hospital, Edinburgh Telephone: - 0131 537 9192. The Scottish Driving Assessment Service can also arrange individual driving assessments in adapted cars.

## 2. How do I contact DVLA to let them know I have had an amputation?

If you are learning to drive or returning to driving after amputation, you are **legally obliged to tell the DVLA (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority) of your amputation**. Preferably you should do this in writing). Or you can download the appropriate driver's questionnaire from the DVLA, Drivers medical website ([www.dvla.gov.uk](http://www.dvla.gov.uk)) or fill the form in online.

## 3. Do I have to tell my insurance company and will it increase my premium?

You must tell your insurance company of your amputation and any driving modifications, as well as any limitations to you driving licence, **before you start driving**. If you fail to **declare any disabilities this may invalidate any insurance claims**.

Some insurance companies may ask for an increased premium, but it is worth comparing insurance quotes. The Equalities Act (2010) should prevent excessive premium requests. Details of insurance companies specialising in providing cover for disabled drivers is

available from The Scottish Driving Assessment Service can provide details of insurance companies who provide cover for disabled drivers.

#### **4. Is there any funding available to help finance a car or pay to have a car fitted with adaptations?**

Funding is available if you receive the:

- higher rate of Disabled Living Allowance (D.L.A)
- enhanced rate of Personal Independence Payment (P.I.P)
- War Pensioners Mobility Supplement (W.P.M.S) or
- Armed Forces Independence Payment (A.F.I.P).

These all make you eligible to join the Motability scheme.

For further info visit [www.motability.co.uk](http://www.motability.co.uk)

#### **Benefits of the Motability scheme include:-**

- Surrender mobility part of your benefit towards the cost of leasing a car.
- New car every 3 years.
- No road tax or insurance costs.
- Free road side recovery

#### **Concessions:-**

- People in receipt of higher rate Mobility DLA or enhanced rate of mobility PIP can apply for exemption of paying road tax, providing that the car is for sole use of the amputee.
- New cars may be exempt from tax (pre delivery) if adapted for sole use of the disabled driver.
- Blue badge schemes are available locally to provide parking concessions for disabled individuals. Please contact your local authority or Occupational Therapist for further advice.

#### **If funding is unavailable:-**

If you are not in receipt of the above benefits, you may have to pay for a car or any adaptations. You may wish to approach a charity for assistance with funding. Some Charities are able to provide grants for vehicle adaptations.

**Charity Search** – provides a free service for people over 50, to help find a grant-giving charity.

Tel: 0117 982 4060 (9.30am-2.30pm)

[www.charitysearch.org.uk](http://www.charitysearch.org.uk)

**Turn2Us** – a website for people in financial need: Also provides a search service for finding grant-giving charities.

[www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk)

## **5. I have a right leg amputation, what do I need to consider?**

We would advise you to drive in an automatic car with either hand controls or left foot accelerator. You will need to contact DVLA about an automatic licence.

### **Hand controls:**

- Hand controls operate the accelerator and brake.
- We would advise hand controls if you have circulatory or sensation problems affecting your left foot.
- We would **strongly recommend** driving lessons with an approved driving instructor. You will need specialist **advice**.
- Hand controls are the only option for bilateral (both) lower limb amputees.

### **Left Foot Accelerator**

- The accelerator pedal is detached from original position and reattached to the left side of the brake pedal.
- Benefits of this modification are that the accelerator pedal can be flipped back into original position to allow conventional driving. Useful if other members of the family are using the same car.
- Requires practise and time to adjust to (drivers have a strong clutch reflex, with a left foot accelerator, danger of hitting accelerator when engaging in an emergency stop).
- We would advise you to have lessons with an accredited driving instructor in an adapted car, before considering this option.

- **This is not an option** if you have circulatory or restricted sensation (e.g. neuropathy) problem.

## **6. I have a left leg amputation, what do I need to consider?**

We would advise you to drive an automatic car.

We would advise you not to drive a manual car, operating the clutch with your left prosthetic leg because:-

- If you unable to wear your prosthesis, you will be unable to drive your car.
- Lack of sensation, you would be unaware if your prosthetic foot slips off the clutch pedal onto the accelerator pedal, or potentially get jammed under another pedal.

## **7. If I don't want an automatic car are there any other options?**

Push button clutches and semi automatic clutches or servo assisted clutches are also available, but you would need specialist advice. Please contact the Scottish Driving Assessment Service.

If you drive an adapted manual car but your licence is for automatic vehicles only, you must make sure the clutch pedal is removed.

## **8. What points should I consider when choosing a car?**

- An automatic car is often the safest method of driving a car following amputation.
- Ease of getting in or out of a car with or without your prosthesis on.
- Height of car in comparison to wheelchair height
- Height of door sill or ability to lift prosthesis over.
- Range of seat adjustment available, e.g. how far back can the seat go, are extended runners required etc.
- Space for your artificial limb in the foot well? Or under the steering wheel if you have an above the knee amputation (Trans femoral).

- Try before you buy. Look at practically getting in or out of the car before purchasing.
- How are you going to stow the wheelchair or mobility aids in the boot.
- Hatch backs often have a high boot, it can be difficult to lift a wheelchair in or out. Do you have the balance to unassemble your wheelchair and stow in the boot?
- Fuel, what techniques do you need to be able to fill up the car?

## **9. Any final tips?**

Following amputation we recommend that you take lessons with an approved driving instructor in an appropriately adapted car. This is to allow you to practise and adapt your driving skills, with any adapted equipment. Driving lessons with an approved instructor will also demonstrate your competence by an independent party.

## **10. Further information**

For further driving advice following amputation and types of adaptations available, please visit – [www.rica.org.uk/content/motoring-after-amputation](http://www.rica.org.uk/content/motoring-after-amputation)

### **Appendices**

- 1. Local driving schools with adapted cars.**
- 2. Modification specialists in Scotland.**

**Remember this leaflet is for general guidance only. The driver is legally obliged to make sure that they have full control of the vehicle.**

**This leaflet is for general guidance only.**

## **Contact Details**

### **Address:**

WestMARC,  
Queen Elizabeth University Hospital  
1345 Govan Road,  
Glasgow G51 4TF

### **Opening Times:**

Monday to Friday: 8:30am - 4:30pm

Telephone: 0844 811 3001

Monday to Friday: 8:45am - 4:15pm

E-mail Address: [westmarc@ggc.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:westmarc@ggc.scot.nhs.uk)

Produced by the Scottish Occupational Therapy Amputee Group  
Prosthetics OT Westmarc April 2018

## Appendix 1 – Local Driving Schools with Adapted Cars

Scottish Driving Assessment Service

Tel: 0131 537 9192

E-Mail: Marlene.Mackenzie@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

### Driving Schools with Automatic and Adapted Vehicles

#### Strathclyde

<p><b>Baxter School of Motoring</b> 21 Bowling Green Road Strathaven Lanarkshire ML10 6DR</p> <p><b>Tel:</b> 0800 731 2720</p> <p><b>Email:</b> baxterdrivingschool@hotmail.co.uk</p> <p><b>Web:</b> www.baxterdrivingschool.co.uk</p>	<p>Nissan Micra automatic with power steering (3 available) (Happy to fit simple modifications to a vehicle if provided by pupil i.e. steering wheel knob , indicator extensions etc)</p> <p>Male and female instructors with automatic cars</p> <p><b>Area covered:</b> Lanarkshire and all of Glasgow {Updated Oct 2016}</p>
<p><b>British School of Motoring (BSM) (Alastair Ward)</b> Glasgow</p> <p><b>Tel:</b> 08457 276 276 (National BSM No.)</p> <p><b>Mobile:</b> 07830 333213 (Alastair Ward)</p> <p><b>Email:</b> aliward1971@live.co.uk</p> <p><b>Web:</b> www.bsm.co.uk</p> <p><b>Area covered:</b> Whole of Glasgow and up to Dumbarton, Paisley</p>	<p>Peugeot 308 automatic with power steering</p> <p><b>Optional:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• right hand push/ pull brake/ accelerator</li><li>• steering wheel knob / spoke</li><li>• left / right indicators</li><li>• left foot accelerator</li><li>• T-bar hand brake modification</li><li>• infra-red unit for secondary controls</li></ul> <p>{Updated July 2016}</p>

<p><b>British School of Motoring</b> (BSM)(Tom Byles) Hamilton <b>Mobile:</b> 07889 019892 <b>Email:</b> t.byles@btinternet.com <b>Web:</b> www.bsm.co.uk <b>Area covered:</b> North and South Lanarkshire, East and North Glasgow: Hamilton, Motherwell, Airdrie, Cumbernauld, East Kilbride, Uddingston, Blantyre, Coatbridge etc.</p>	<p>Peugeot 308 automatic with power steering <b>Optional:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• right hand push/ pull brake/ accelerator</li> <li>• steering wheel knob/spoke/ lollipop grip</li> <li>• left/right indicators</li> <li>• left foot accelerator</li> <li>• Automatic handbrake</li> <li>• infra-red unit for secondary control with steering wheel knob /lollipop grip</li> <li>• cushions</li> </ul> <p>{Updated Oct 2016}</p>
<p><b>British School of Motoring</b> (BSM) (Gerry Anderson) Kilmarnock <b>Mob:</b> 07903 246005 <b>E-mail:</b> gerald.anderson1@ btopenworld.com <b>Area covered:</b> Most of Ayrshire Willing to instruct in client's own car if insured</p>	<p>Peugeot 308 automatic with power steering <b>Optional:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• right hand push; pull brake and accelerator</li> <li>• steering wheel knob or lollipop grip</li> <li>• left/right indicators</li> <li>• left foot accelerator</li> <li>• T-bar hand brake modification</li> <li>• blue tooth unit for secondary controls</li> <li>• additional mirrors</li> <li>• pedal extensions</li> </ul> <p>{Updated Oct 2016}</p>

<p><b>DRM Driver Training</b>  (Eddie Fisher)  991 Cathcart Road  Glasgow G42 9XJ  <b>Tel:</b> 0800 279 8353  <b>E-mail:</b> team@  drmdrivertraining.co.uk  <b>Web:</b> www.drmdrivertraining.  co.uk</p>	<p>Automatic Renault Clio</p> <p><b>Area covered:</b> Greater Glasgow, Renfrewshire, Lanarkshire  {Updated Oct 2016}</p>
<p><b>Jim Campbell Driving School</b>  273 Greenrigg Road  Cumbernauld G67 2PN</p> <p><b>Tel:</b> 01236 612016  <b>Mob:</b> 07862 213825</p>	<p>Automatic Kia Rio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>steering wheel ball</li> </ul> <p>Also can offer instruction in a manual geared car.</p> <p><b>Area covered:</b> Glasgow, Airdrie, Coatbridge etc.  {Updated Oct 2016}</p>
<p><b>Beetle Driver Training</b>  (John Campbell)  Rosewood Park  Hamilton ML3 9HR</p> <p><b>Mob:</b> 07825 168300 – please text if possible  <b>E-mail:</b> beetledrivertraining@gmail.com</p>	<p>Automatic VW Beetle Sport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>steering wheel ball</li> </ul> <p><b>Area covered:</b> Glasgow City Centre, East End, Shotts, East Kilbride, Lanark etc.  {Added Jun '17}</p>

<p><b>Apex Driving School</b>  (Andrew Tait)  Strathcraig  Eaglesfield  Lockerbie DG11 3PQ  <b>Tel:</b> 01461 500317  <b>Mob:</b> 07711 967 666.  <b>E-mail:</b> andrew.tait@btinternet.com</p>	<p>Automatic Suzuki Swift  (no adaptations)</p> <p><b>Area covered:</b> South Dumfriesshire</p> <p>{Updated Oct 2016}</p>
<p><b>AA School of Motoring</b>  (Ian McAllister)  Dorset Square  Glasgow G3 7LL</p> <p><b>Tel:</b> 07759 880989  <b>E-mail:</b> ian.macallister@hotmail.co.uk</p>	<p>Automatic Ford Fiesta or pupil's own car (if insured)  (no adaptations)</p> <p><b>Area covered:</b> City of Glasgow and some areas outwith, e.g. Paisley, Cumbernauld or other areas up to 40 minutes from central Glasgow</p> <p>{Updated Oct 2016}</p>
<p><b>Auto-Man School of Motoring</b>  (Tommy Walker)  32 Hazlitt Place  Glasgow G20 9LN</p> <p><b>Tel:</b> 07971 108402  <b>E-mail:</b> tommywalker310@talktalk.net</p>	<p>Automatic Vauxhall Corsa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• steering wheel ball</li> </ul> <p><b>Area covered:</b> Glasgow and surrounding areas</p> <p>{Updated Oct 2016}</p>

<p><b>British School of Motoring</b> (Joseph Cunningham or Thomas Marmion) Glasgow G72 7DR</p> <p><b>Mob:</b> 07834 192096 (Joseph) <b>E-mail:</b> twojsds@yahoo.co.uk</p> <p><b>Mob:</b> 07729 612336 (Thomas) E-mail: thomasmarmion@btinternet.com</p> <p><b>Area Covered:</b> all Glasgow postcodes and ML3/4/5</p>	<p>Automatic Peugeot 308 or client's own car</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• push or pull hand controls</li> <li>• left foot accelerator</li> <li>• steering wheel knob</li> <li>• infra-red unit for secondary controls</li> <li>• convex mirror</li> <li>• handbrake extension</li> <li>• transfer board or Handibar</li> </ul> <p>{Updated July 2016}</p>
<p><b>Largs School of Motoring</b> (Kenneth Muir) 22 St Andrews Drive Bridge of Weir PA11 3HS</p> <p><b>Tel:</b> 01475 674880 / 0845 230 4880 <b>Mobile No:</b> 07914 014177 <b>E-mail:</b> info@lsmdriving.com</p>	<p>Automatic Daihatsu Siron</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• steering wheel ball</li> </ul> <p><b>Area covered:</b> Largs, Ayr, Irvine, Kilbirnie, Beith, Dalry, Greenock, Saltcoats, Ardrossan, West Kilbride, Fairlie (and everywhere in between)</p> <p>{ Updated July 2016}</p>

<p><b>Anchor School of Motoring</b> (Marie Tomlinson) Carlisle</p> <p><b>Tel:</b> 01228 522366</p>	<p>Automatic Renault Capture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• left foot accelerator</li> <li>• trigger hand operated accelerator with push brake (no longer has standard push or pull hand controls)</li> <li>• over ring accelerator and push brake Rt or Lt side</li> <li>• infra-red unit for secondary controls</li> <li>• steering wheel knob</li> </ul> <p><b>Area covered:</b> South West Scotland including Dumfries (Updated Jan 2017)</p>
<p><b>Harvey's School of Motoring</b> (Peter Harvey) Paisley</p> <p><b>Tel:</b> 01505 814823 <b>Mob:</b> 07774 139080</p> <p><b>E-mail:</b> harveysom@btinternet.com</p>	<p>Automatic Nissan Note</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• steering wheel ball</li> </ul> <p><b>Area covered:</b> Paisley, Elderslie, Johnstone, Barrhead</p> <p>{Updated Jun 2016}</p>

While we have attempted to ensure the information provided on this sheet is accurate, the Scottish Driving Assessment Service does not endorse or make any representations as to the quality or cost of the suppliers or services listed here. We cannot accept liability of any kind arising out of or in connection with the use of this information or any reliance placed on it by any person.

## Appendix 2 – Modification Specialists in Scotland

Scottish Driving Assessment Service

Tel: 0131 537 9192

Modification Specialists in Scotland

**Key to Services:** **1** (hand controls); **2** (more sophisticated primary hand controls); **3** (lightened steering; brakes; pedals); **4** (adaptations for parking brake; gears; clutch); **5** (secondary controls); **6** (sophisticated custom-built control solutions); **7** (seating – cushions); **8** (seating – replacement seats); **9** (manual swivel seats); **10** (powered lifting or swivel seats); **11** (wheelchair hoists)

<p><b>P L Mobility</b>            Unit G, Lochlands Industrial Estate, Larbert            FK5 3NS   01324 562240 / 07977 921831   <b>E-mail:</b> enquiries@plmobility.com   <b>Web:</b> www.plmobility.com</p>	<p>1      6            2      8            3      9            4     10            5     11</p>
<p><b>Car Controls Limited</b>            2 Blackadder Place,            East Kilbride G75 8YT   07968 073955   <b>E-mail:</b> harrythompson@blueyonder.co.uk   <b>Web:</b> www.carcontrols.co.uk</p>	<p>1</p>
<p><b>Allied Mobility</b>            230 Balmore Road,            Glasgow G22 6LJ   0141 336 3211   <b>E-mail:</b> info@alliedmobility.com   <b>Web:</b> www.alliedmobility.com</p>	<p>1      6            2      8            3      9            4     10            5     11</p>

<p><b>Wheelchair Care</b>  21 West Road, Greshop Ind Estate,  Forres, Morayshire IV36 2GW  ☎ 01309 676677  ✉ <b>E-mail:</b> enquiries@wheelchair-care.co.uk  🌐 <b>Web:</b> www.wheelchair-care.co.uk</p>	<p>1 9  2 10  5 11  7  8</p>
<p><b>Techmobility Scotland</b>  21 High Street East, Anstruther,  Fife KY10 3DG  ☎ 01333 313932  ✉ <b>E-mail:</b> murray@techmobilityuk.com  🌐 <b>Web:</b> www.techmobilityuk.com</p>	<p>1 6 11  2 7  3 8  4 9  5 10</p>
<p><b>City Mobility</b>  46a Seafield Road,  Inverness IV1 1SG  ☎ 01463 250850  ✉ <b>E-mail:</b> info@city-mobility.co.uk  🌐 <b>Web:</b> www.city-mobility.co.uk</p>	<p>1 7  2 8  4 9  5 10  6 11</p>
<p><b>George Cowan Vehicle conversions</b>  17 Hilton Road,  Cowdenbeath KY4 9EJ  ☎ 07900 216496</p>	<p>1 5  2 11  4</p>
<p><b>Adaptmobility</b>  Am Fasgadh, Auldhill Road, Bridgend,  Linlithgow EH49 6NH  ☎ 01506 834733  ✉ <b>E-mail:</b> dav7958@aol.com  🌐 <b>Web:</b> www.adaptmobility.me.uk</p>	<p>1 8  2 9  3 10  4 11  5</p>

<b>Autochair Ltd</b>			
Unit 20, Mitchelston Drive,	1	6	11
Kirkcaldy KY1 3NF	2	7	
☎ 01592 655460/ 07717 836563 (Mob) /	3	8	
0800 214045	4	9	
✉ <b>E-mail:</b> info@autochair.co.uk	5	10	
🌐 <b>Web:</b> www.autochair.co.uk			
<b>AJN Adaptations</b>	1		
39 Forrest Street,	2		
St Andrews KY16 8HR	4		
☎ 07977 150465	5		
✉ <b>E-mail:</b> ajnadaptations@gmail.com	11		

While we have attempted to ensure the information provided on this sheet is accurate, the Scottish Driving Assessment Service does not endorse or make any representations as to the quality or cost of the suppliers or services listed here. We cannot accept liability of any kind arising out of or in connection with the use of this information or any reliance placed on it by any person.