



# Turning Points

Diabetic ulcers: care & prevention • Espire Elbow joins portfolio • Steeper celebrates 50 years in Leeds



# CEO message

## Paul Steeper

The third quarter has seen us reach 50 Years in our HQ city of Leeds.

The Espire Elbow has been added to the upper limb portfolio. Manufactured by College Park this prosthetic range offers five models to suit a variety of patients.

We have also added the Lindhe Xtend Connect to our lower limb component range; an innovative and easy-to-use device which gives the user flexibility over their limb and socket usage.

Tim Howarth gives an insight into his career as a Steeper prosthetist and what motivated him to pursue a career in healthcare.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and please do share any feedback to [marketingteam@steepergroup.com](mailto:marketingteam@steepergroup.com).

Best wishes,



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We would love to hear from you!

Please send your feedback to:

[marketingteam@steepergroup.com](mailto:marketingteam@steepergroup.com)

# Diabetic Wound Care: Prevention, Symptoms and Treatment

Diabetic foot ulcers are open wounds that take a longer time to heal due to vascular disease or elevations in blood glucose levels, **4.5 million people live with diabetes in the UK**, and this number continues to rise with **diabetic foot ulcers affecting 10% of these people**. Complications from a diabetic foot ulcer can ultimately lead to amputation if it becomes severely infected or left untreated. Over 7000 amputations are carried out each year due to diabetic complications.

### What are the causes?

Ulcers can be caused by the length of time you have had diabetes, poor circulation, foot deformities and trauma/irritation to the skin caused by friction or pressure.

People who have had diabetes for long durations often develop neuropathy due to nerve damage, causing them to have **reduced or a complete lack of feeling to the foot**, making it harder to spot any foot health issues as there will be little or no warning pain. It is therefore extremely important to make sure you thoroughly check your feet for any signs of broken skin or sores.

### Diabetic Foot Ulcers | Prevention Tips

1. Wash and dry your feet thoroughly.
2. Inspect your feet every day, especially in between the toes.
3. Don't walk barefoot.
4. Only wear comfortable shoes that do not cause chafing.
5. Wear loose fitted socks to promote blood circulation.
6. Cut your toe nails straight across to avoid ingrown toenails.
7. Visit your GP frequently for foot examinations.
8. Work closely with a GP to control blood sugar levels.
9. Cut down on smoking and alcohol consumption.

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include drainage, bleeding, redness or swelling and if the wound has progressed significantly there may be a noticeable odour.

### When to seek medical attention?

As soon as you notice an ulcer forming, contact your GP immediately. No matter how small or insignificant you think it may be, it is always better to have any abnormalities checked and treated as quickly as possible to increase healing time before any infections may arise.

For more information about diabetic foot ulcers, read the full article on our website [www.steepergroup.com](http://www.steepergroup.com)

# AOPA National Assembly and ISPO World Congress

Between 25<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> September; SteeperUSA exhibited at AOPA National Assembly in San Diego, showcasing the range of upper limb components and cosmesis offered by Steeper throughout the United States to the 2400 attendees. Our range of cosmetic gloves and Skinergy Plus cosmesis proved ever popular with clinicians, technicians and users who visited the booth. Kristine Yeagley, US Operations Manager, said "AOPA was a great success with many attendees stopping to check out the range of cosmeses we offer and to discuss possible lightweight elbow solutions."



ISPO World Congress took place in Kobe Japan between 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> October. The team were there to showcase our upper limb portfolio, including custom silicone which drew in attendees to see the fine detail which can be added to the cosmesis.

Also on display was the Espire Elbow solution from College Park, a range of powered and body powered elbow devices with a sleek anatomical look. Carl Chatfield, Product Sales Director said "The Espire Pro attracted great attention, an excellent solution for upper limb amputees it proved really popular with visitors to the booth; as did our custom silicone range; we had both upper and lower limb examples for attendees to view and feel - they were impressed by the level of detail which can be achieved."



# Steeper Group and SteeperUSA Featured in the Press

Manufacturing Today Europe have chosen to **feature Steeper Group** as their company profile feature within Issue 168, 2019. The article appears in both the printed magazine and online version; and highlights the passion our teams put into the creation of every prosthetic and orthotic device produced. You can view the full article online at [www.manufacturing-today-europe.com](http://www.manufacturing-today-europe.com)

SteeperUSA feature in the September 2019 edition of O&P Almanac; giving members of the American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association (AOPA) an insight into the whole organisation and in particular the work of SteeperUSA.







## Steeper Host Naked Prosthetics Symposiums

On the 11th and 12th of September Steeper hosted Naked Prosthetics Symposiums, where they presented their innovative range of hand and digit technology to prosthetists, technicians and occupational therapists from across the UK.



Naked Prosthetics design and manufacture hard-wearing custom upper limb prosthesis for people with finger amputations. Designed to be robust for functionality, these devices allow users to take on more strenuous load-bearing tasks. The team demonstrated the functionality of these ground-breaking devices providing delegates with the opportunity to see them in action, as well as how to identify suitable patients so functional outcomes can be achieved.

Drew Leininger, Director of International Business Development, said of the event: "One of our favourite parts of the symposiums was meeting clinicians who had been following us for months, eager to provide our products to their patients."

If you would like more detail please speak to your Steeper Product Manager and keep an eye out for updates about Naked Prosthetics on the Steeper Group website.



## Discover Xtend Connect

The Lindhe Xtend Connect Range is the latest addition to our lower limb prosthetic components range comes from **innovative manufacturers Lindhe Xtend**. Run by its founder and tripple amputee, Christoffer Lindhe, the company strive to provide functional and innovative prosthetics which provide freedom and movement to their users. The new Xtend Connect range is made up of components which offer **multiple combinations and rotation directions** for individual preferences and varying limb builds.

Christoffer identified that daily issues for prosthetic users included difficulty in pulling trousers on over prosthetic feet, and the lengthy means to replace shoes during the day. This was the inspiration behind the Xtend Connect - a two-part component build designed to **offer greater flexibility**, as it allows for sockets and prosthetics to be exchanged quickly, whilst keeping the limb builds intact.

With features such as a simple **wheel lock mechanism**, and **unique safety button**, the system is quick and easy to use. Alongside this, prosthetists have greater freedom when integrating these within limb builds, and they can be used on transfemoral and transtibial components, with the ability to build in-line and below the socket.

For more information visit [www.steepergroup.com](http://www.steepergroup.com)

## New Espire Elbow Range Added to Steeper Prosthetics Portfolio



Designed by College Park, we are proud to be distributors of the Espire Elbow to a worldwide market, along with exclusive distribution rights within the UK.

This innovative prosthetic elbow has been designed with the user experience in mind, combining **functionality with a sleek appearance**, and available in five models and six finish options to accommodate various users. The entire range is compatible with a variety of terminal devices currently on the market, and can be easily programmed to fit individual needs for everyday tasks.



One of the most striking features of the device is the appearance, as the team at College Park were keen on emulating the anatomical shape of the forearm and wrist which provides a natural and comfortable resting position.

The Espire Pro model is a powered elbow unit to provide a powerful lift capacity, and features an electronic locking function to perform everyday tasks with ease. The Pro along with the Hybrid can be configured via a Bluetooth connection with the Espire Hub app for iPad, enabling prosthetists to alters sensitivity, movement and swing functions to suit the user's needs.



Rather than being electronically powered, the Hybrid, Classic and Classic Plus models use an **intelligent counterbalance system**, so users can comfortably position the device as it balances the weight of the forearm, wrist and terminal device.

For more information about the Espire Elbow range visit our website [www.steepergroup.com](http://www.steepergroup.com)

## AT Team at Irwin Mitchell Solicitors Event

The Assistive Technology team attended the "Mind, Body and Home - a Holistic Approach to Spinal Cord Injury" event held by Irwin Mitchell Solicitors in September. Attendees included case managers, solicitors and occupational therapists.

Environmental control devices including the evo+ and Gridpad were demonstrated, highlighting to attendees how the products assist those living with spinal cord injuries to live a more independent life, including being able to open or close blinds, curtains and doors as well as operating peripheral appliances such as lamps.





# Steeper Celebrate 50 Years in Leeds with Sponsorship of Light Night Event



To celebrate 50 years of work carried out in in Leeds and the wider Yorkshire region, Steeper have teamed up with Leeds City Council to sponsor Light Night - an annual arts event which includes a live parade, light projections and interactive installations. Paul Steeper explains why we chose to partner with the event: "Sponsoring Light Night brings to life what we do in Leeds and importantly, the different abilities of individuals who utilise our products and services. We are proud of the service we provide in Leeds, and of our team who care for patients, meticulously manufacture devices, and support the business from our Leeds headquarters."

CFO John Midgley said "Leeds and Yorkshire flow through the heart of our business, we employ over 200 people in Leeds producing over 6000 devices every month. From our Seacroft Hospital-based prosthetic and orthotic clinic we carry out 30,000 appointments each year making us very much a part of the city, and the wider region we also provide an orthotic service to the Mid-Yorkshire NHS Trust."



Steeper Group invited teams, patients and the public to view the illuminations in the Town Hall Zone of Light Night Leeds, where the art festival had over a dozen installations and a live parade passed by.

# Harold Wood win 'Making a Difference' Award

The prosthetics team at Harold Wood have been awarded the 'Making a Difference' award by the NELFT Trust. After receiving patient praise on the service they provide, the team were nominated by colleagues to receive this well-deserved recognition.



Patient feedback which highlighted the team's passion and hard work stated: 'I have to say, it is unlike any other NHS establishment I have entered. From the very point of entry to exiting on completion of my various visits, I have been astonished and the conduct, care, assistance and understanding exhibited by all staff.' The award comes thanks to the Steeper and NELFT team there, for continuously providing positive outcomes for their patients.

# 50 Years of Service Award Presented

The London Prosthetic Centre prosthetic technician Dennis celebrates 50 years with Steeper. He joined the LPC team in 2008, after having worked for Steeper at Queen Mary's Hospital Roehampton for 39 years. In his time with the company he has been responsible for manufacturing all types of prosthetic devices and overseen training of numerous technicians to pass on his expertise.



# 09:15

## Wednesday 18th September

Steeper Prosthetist Tim started his day watching a patient walk for the first time on a new prosthesis.

"I see turning points in my patients every day, for me it's the small wins of watching someone achieve a goal they've set themselves that is really rewarding. Not everyone can be a Paralympian, for most patients it's getting back to enjoying a hobby or going back to work that are their big wins and it's our job to help them"



"As a prosthetist, I always liken myself to a car salesman who can't drive! I have to listen to the patient about what they think and feel about their prostheses; and I have to learn about the best techniques, latest technologies and best practice to ensure I give the patient, the best possible solution for their particular needs."

Case Study





# Case Study

## Tim Howarth



### The story

Working as an engineer for a large car manufacturer, Tim enjoyed the technical aspects of his role but found the job to be less fulfilling than he'd hoped. After a review and discussion with a career advisor, Tim realised his passion was for helping people, not fine-tuning automobile parts; "I had a bit of a lightbulb moment and realised I wanted to help others, however as an engineer I wasn't sure my skills would translate. After more deliberation and research, I found that I could combine healthcare and engineering by looking at the biomechanical structure of the body; looking into courses I embarked on re-training and a new career as a prosthetist."

Tim studied Orthotics and Prosthetics as a mature student, graduating from Salford University in 2008 and honed his skills as a prosthetist in Wolverhampton; before joining Steeper Group at Aintree University Hospital nearly three years ago.

### The solution

Working from our Liverpool branch, Tim is part of a close knit team; all have their own individual skills to ensure a service which specialise in more complex socket design and provision. Tim's place within the team is as a specialist with microprocessor knees (MPKs), such as the Plié 3, as he has a keen knowledge of prosthetic programming software.

When it comes to patient care Tim likes to build trust with his patients "Patients have to have confidence a prosthetist's knowledge, it's a massive decision prescribing to an individual patient, as there are so many devices on the market. It's vital to build an understanding of what each individual wants to achieve that is also realistic within a given time frame - amputations happen for very different reasons and all patients want to live their life the way they want to. It's my job to listen, understand and explain what the possibilities are and ensure the patient leaves with the most appropriate and comfortable prostheses to achieve their goals."

Tim is also a member of the Steeper Clinical Support Group (CSG), who evaluate the latest devices to ensure

each product added to the Steeper product portfolio is of benefit to the end user and is cost effective for NHS centres. Tim explains "As prosthetic devices are developed to overcome specific challenges, it's vital that we assess them in conjunction with users and the clinical attributes to recommend them to other prosthetists and patients. It's great being part of the CSG as I get to see the latest prosthetic products and I am always thinking about how they could benefit my patients."

### The turning point

Tim has developed his skills within prosthetics further since joining Steeper Group, taking on many complex cases and challenging prescriptions. The Liverpool team specialise in providing solutions for challenging socket requirements. Tim also passes his skills and knowledge on to the next generation of prosthetists as Aintree is a training centre for Salford Prosthetic and Orthotic students.

"A recent turning point for a slender bilateral patient was two new limb builds where as a team we created new sockets, added light weight components and a free swing knee to the patient's existing feet to save over 5kg in weight. This has made a huge difference to this individual and they are now able to move around far more freely, keeping things lightweight and simple and by working together; patient, prosthetist and technicians we've delivered something fantastic."

*"Watching a patient take their first step on a new prosthesis when they weren't convinced they'd get out of a wheelchair is exciting, and not just for the patient; as the prosthetist knowing you've built the right socket, prescribed the best limb build for the individual and that you've made a difference in someone's life is far better than assembling any car!"*

**To find out more about a career as a prosthetist, visit [www.steepergroup.com](http://www.steepergroup.com)**