Whether you're an established amputee or recently suffering from limb loss, the prospect of booking a holiday and travelling by plane can be daunting. We have heard from LA members on a number of issues over the years, with the comments and complaints accelerating since 9/11, the 'shoe-bomber' incident, the stringent security measures that were imposed last year following further threat of terrorist attack and most recently, the latest baggage weight allowances.

The singular most important factor in booking flights is planning ahead. Air travel is unpredictable at the best of times but there are some things you can do to help control the potentially negative aspects of the unknown and make your trip more manageable and enjoyable. Being prepared and letting people know if you might need assistance in order to make arrangements in advance is the first and most important factor.

If you are booking your holiday through a travel agent, this information process will be facilitated, as long as you are clear about your requirements. For example, the ever-increasing size of airport terminals could mean that you now may need to book a wheelchair or buggy so that the possible stress of a long walk on your prosthetics is eased. At Heathrow and Gatwick, for instance, they estimate the walk from terminal to gate can average a 20-minute walk. Far better to book wheelchair services in advance, than face the prospect of a long flight in possible pain.

However you book your flights, being self-prepared is vital. If you have diabetes, ensure that is under good control, if you need immunisation shots, try to get them well in advance so that if they make you unwell, you have time to recover. For the same reason, it's probably a good idea to see your prosthetist early enough before you leave to troubleshoot any potential problems and allow time for you to adjust to any repair or modifications. It's also possibly relevant, if travelling to a non-English speaking country, to learn a few vital phrases 'I have a prosthetic leg', for example, or 'I use a wheelchair.'

Amputees travelling without some type of survival kit take the same risk as driving a car without a spare tyre. Residual limbs change under pressure, over time and especially under increased activity. Prosthetic parts can give out under extra wear and tear. What can be a minor inconvenience at home can be disastrous abroad. Suggested items may include: adhesive membrane dressings for abrasions or blisters, wipes or antibacterial soap to keep your residual limb(s) clean, extra socks and liners, duct tape for temporary repairs and a small pair of scissors for cutting holes in socks. For ease through security, store all these items in your main suitcase, along with your swimming/shower/spare limbs. An extra tip is to pack the hollow in any spare limbs with underwear/swimming gear and then wrap the limb/s in a towel or clothing for protection. If you wish to take a spare prosthesis with your hand luggage, please check with the airline.

The airlines are continuing to permit prescription based medications and other liquids needed by persons with disabilities and medical conditions, and it seems advisable to continue carrying any vital medicines in your hand luggage. Essential medicines in liquid form must be sufficient and essential for the flight eg diabetic kit – as long as verified and authentic with a name that matches the passenger’s ticket.

Which brings us to baggage weight allowances. These can differ, depending on the airline and even the class you are travelling in for example, with Easy Jet, currently each passenger travelling from the UK is allowed 50 kilos hold baggage, including any sports equipment, subject to available space. However, the normal...