

Challenging hype around “printing” 3D arms and legs?

Recently there's been a lot of hype surrounding the promise of 3D printed limbs. Everywhere from The New York Times to Popular Science to the Today Show has run stories on people all over the world printing hands. The narrative goes like this: Prosthetic hands are really expensive—a recent Uproxx documentary about 3D printed hands claimed that the average prosthetic on the market costs \$60,000—while the 3D printed version cost far less, and can be fixed and replaced with a simple push of a button on a printer. Welcome to the future, the world in which the everyman can print his own arm, breaking free from the chains of debt-by-prosthetic.

But that's not exactly a true story. In February, the American Orthotics and Prosthetics Association (AOPA) released a statement clarifying a few key points.

The average upper extremity prosthesis does not cost anywhere near \$40,000 to \$80,000, as many of these accounts claim. It actually costs something like \$1,500 to \$8,000. The AOPA statement also pointed out that in many cases, the people printing hands are operating illegally. There are 15 states in which providing a prosthetic or orthotic device is illegal without a license. Prosthetists are trained medical professionals, with licenses that take years of education and apprenticeships. The people printing these arms have none of that, which can, in theory, become dangerous. These arms and hands they're printing aren't FDA tested, break easily, and should never be used to replace a prosthetic arm.

Read full, original article: [The Reality of 3D Printed Robo-Hands](#)