

# Boston Digital Arm System with Multi-Articulating Hands

## Boston Digital Arm System:

The Boston Arm is compatible with all manufacturers' terminal devices including those that have internal controllers and those that do not. Now it is also compatible with the new multi-articulating hands, *bebionic* and *iLimb*.

## Multi-articulating Hands:

The *bebionic* and *iLimb* hands provide a new option for upper-limb amputees. These "dexterous" hands are completely different from traditional electric hands which clamp the thumb against the first two fingers. The dexterous hands independently power the fingers and thumb allowing the hand to grasp objects by conforming to the shape of the object. As a result, the grasp does not require as much gripping force to hold an object securely. Since this hand has five motors, its power requirements are significantly different from traditional electric hands.



*bebionic* Hand

With the introduction of the new dexterous hands, *bebionic* and *iLimb*, battery requirements have changed. Traditional single-motor electric terminal devices require batteries that deliver 7.4 volts and about 1.5 amps. The

dexterous hands have 4-5 motors rather than one and require batteries that deliver 7.4 volts but significantly more current (3-6 amps). When all of the hand motors close/stall simultaneously, the current requirements are quite high and traditional batteries are simply not capable of delivering the current required for the full grasp force. Additionally, running 4-5 motors results in greater power consumption so these hands require larger capacity batteries. Traditional single-motor terminal devices require batteries with capacities of 450-800 mAHr. But the new dexterous hands require larger capacities, typically 1350-2000 mAHr.



Boston Digital Arm System

## New Boston Arm Battery:

Powered elbow systems like the Boston Digital Arm were supplied with batteries in the 1000-1100 mAHr capacity range. These batteries were generally adequate to operate the elbow and a powered terminal device for an entire day. The patient could charge the system every night and operate for a full day without recharging or replacing the battery with a fresh one. The introduction of dexterous hands has

**LTI** Liberating Technologies, Inc.

325 Hopping Brook Road, Suite A, Holliston, MA 01746-1456

Phone 508-893-6363 FAX 508-893-9966

[www.liberatingtech.com](http://www.liberatingtech.com)

changed this. These 1100 mAHr batteries are no longer adequate to run the elbow and dexterous hand for a full day. So the patient has three options; 1) replace the battery mid-day, 2) recharge the battery mid-day, or 3) add a “supplemental” battery to power the dexterous hand.

Further complicating this situation, powered elbows like the Boston Digital Arm were designed to operate multiple devices simultaneously. With independent inputs, the user can run the elbow and hand simultaneously for greater efficiency and more natural motion. Again, running more motors simultaneously increases the load on the battery, requiring more current and larger capacities.

Finally there is the issue of voltage. Elbow motors like the Boston Digital Arm’s deliver more torque for greater lifting capability. These high torque motors are not required for terminal devices. As a result, elbow motors often require higher voltages (11-14 volts) whereas terminal device motors operate at lower voltages (7.2-8.4 volts).

To assure optimal performance of the elbow and dexterous hands, several requirements must be met if a single battery is to be used. The battery must produce both 11-14 volts and 10-13 amps for the elbow and 7.2-8.4 volts and 5-6 amps for the hand. Without a sophisticated circuit, this is difficult to do with a single battery.

#### **Redesigned Boston Digital Arm:**

The Boston Digital Arm was redesigned in 2010 with new high-strength urethane molded forearm and battery covers and the battery was upgraded, eliminating the Ni-CAD technology and replacing this with a new lithium-polymer

battery. Lithium-polymer chemistry’s high energy density makes it an excellent choice for this application. This new 2000 mAHr battery has twice the capacity of the original battery and yet is 30% lighter. The battery also has an on-board fuel gauge and appropriate safety features to assure safe and reliable operation under normal operating conditions. The light-weight battery reduces the total weight of the Boston Digital Arm to less than 2 pounds, making it the lighter than competitive microcontroller-based powered adult elbows.



Lithium-polymer Battery (BC360)

The new Lithium-polymer battery (BE360) also has an optional Voltage Regulator circuit board (BE361) to reduce the voltage to 7.4 volts (nominal) for the dexterous hands. This efficiently delivers the regulated voltage and adequate current to the hand for optimal performance.

The new Lithium-polymer battery can also be fit to existing Boston Digital Arm Systems, so when your patient’s battery reaches 2-4 years of age, consider this battery for a replacement. If your patient wants one of the new dexterous hands (*bebionic* or *iLimb*), consider offering the battery upgrade to optimize the hand performance

For additional information on the Boston Digital Arm System, bebionic or iLimb hand and the new Lithium-polymer battery, contact Liberating Technologies, Inc. at **800-437-0024**.

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