
The Bone & Joint Center

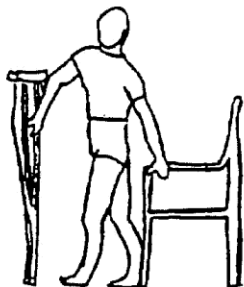
Orthopaedic Center of Excellence

CRUTCH WALKING TIPS

Home Instructions

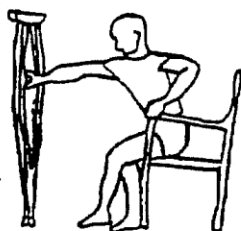
Crutches are to be used to keep weight off your leg as it heals. It is important that you follow the instructions below; you are going to learn a new skill which will require your full attention.

1. The first thing to consider is safety. You need to walk with confidence and keep in control. Don't look down at your feet. Look ahead and watch where you are going!
2. Pressure (weight) goes on your hands and not on your armpits.
3. Keep your elbows into your sides to help stabilize the crutches under your arms.
4. Don't walk with your crutches in too close to your feet - you may trip on them. Your crutches should be placed 2-3 inches out to the side of your feet.



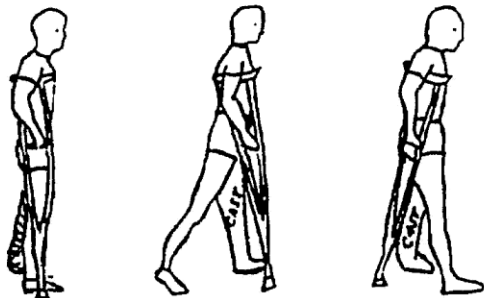
5. Do not sit down with your crutches under your arms. Rather, take them out and place both of them on your good side, hanging onto the hand grips with one hand while your other hand takes hold of the armrest or edge of the chair to sit down.

6. When in the process of sitting down, make sure the back of your legs touch the chair before sitting or you may land on the floor. It is easier to get in and out of chairs with arm rests.



7. When getting up from the sitting position, slide forward in your chair as far as possible with the stronger (uninvolved) leg back further than the involved leg, along with leaning forward and pushing off with your arms. Both crutches should be on your unaffected side with the other hand on the edge of the chair or arm rest to aid in pushing yourself up.

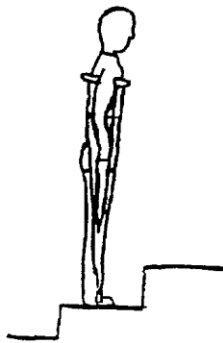
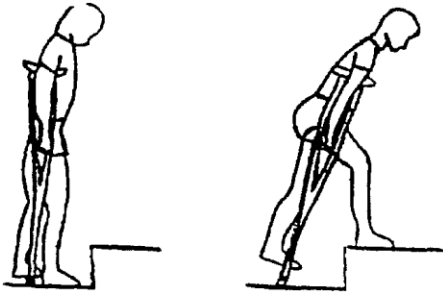
8. The toilet seat at home is probably lower than the toilet seat at the hospital, so put both crutches on one side (handgrips) and hand onto the hand bar, sink, or toilet seat edge with the other hand when sitting or standing from the toilet.



9. Three-Point Crutch Gait:
This means that when you walk you will move both crutches forward an equal distance. You then step forward with your affected leg, push down on your crutches and step all the way through on your "good" leg.

10. Climbing Stairs:

Don't panic, it can be done safely and easily if you take your time and don't rush! A riddle to remember as to which foot leads when stair climbing is, "up with the good and down with the bad".



To Go Up Stairs:

Keep involved leg down - push down on crutches and step up with the uninvolved foot, then bring the crutches up and involved leg.



To Go Down Stairs:

Move to edge of step, hold involved leg in front, move crutches down first, then involved leg, push down on crutches, step down with uninvolved leg.

11. If a hand rail is available, put both crutches under the arm opposite the hand rail. Use hand rail as one crutch. Follow the same procedure as above. Always use hand rail when possible.
12. When crutch walking on carpet you must pick up your crutches and affected leg more than if you were walking on tile or linoleum floors. It is a good idea to pick up all throw rugs to avoid slipping or tripping on them.
13. When getting into a car, remember to get to the side when opening the door. Back up until you feel the edge of the car and then grab hold of the back rest with one hand and crutches with the other hand on arm grips. Sit down first and then bring your feet in one at a time.
14. You should elevate your affected leg up on some pillows for one hour in the morning, afternoon, and evening the first couple of weeks until the swelling subsides.