



London Health Sciences Centre

Patient Information

CRUTCH WALKING

Non-Weight Bearing with pictures

Be sure your crutches fit you:

- To fit your crutches, stand up straight, look forward and relax your shoulders.
- The top of the crutch should be about 2 finger widths below your armpit (3-4cm or 1-2in).
- Your crutch tips should be 5-8cm or 2-3in from the outside of your feet. This will help to prevent you from tripping.
- The handgrip should be at your wrist crease when your arms are straight at your side.

Using Your Crutches:

- Your elbow should have a slight bend when holding onto the crutches.
- Put your weight through your hands, **NOT** your armpits.
- Squeeze the crutches between your side and arm so they do not slip out.
- Keep the crutches wide enough so that your body can swing through.



Safety Tips:

- Always wear supportive shoes while using crutches (example: running shoes).
- Check the screws daily and tighten them as needed.
- Crutch tips (rubber stoppers) should be firmly in place, clean, dry and not worn down.
- Avoid wet surfaces as much as possible. If you have to walk on a wet surface, take small steps.
- Scatter and throw rugs are a tripping hazard. If possible, remove them from your home.

NON- WEIGHT BEARING (NWB)

- You may **not** put any weight on your affected leg. Do not let your affected leg touch the floor when standing or walking.
 - Place both crutches about 30cm or 1 ft. ahead of you.
 - While holding your affected leg off the floor, swing your body forward putting your weight through your hands.
 - Place with your unaffected leg slightly ahead of your crutches.

SITTING/STANDING

These instructions apply to getting up from and getting into a chair, couch, toilet, etc.

Getting up:

- Move to the edge of the chair.
- Place crutches in one hand (on affected side) and hold them by the handgrips. Put the other hand on the surface you are standing from (for example: arm of the chair).
- Keep your affected leg off of the floor and push up with your arms into standing.
- Once you are balanced, put your crutches under your armpits one at a time.

Sitting Down:

- Back up to the chair until you feel it against the back of your legs.
- Hold both crutches in one hand on your affected side.
- Reach back with the other hand to the armrest.
- Slowly lower yourself down; keep your affected leg off of the floor.



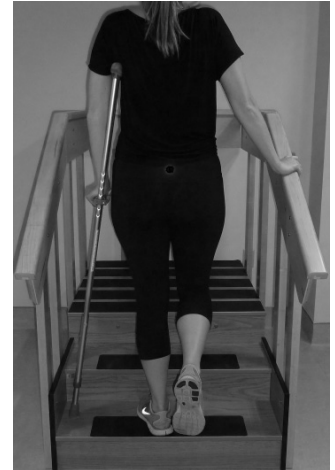
STAIRS

Whenever possible, use a railing on one side and one or both crutches on the other. It does not matter which side the railing is on. If there is no railing, use both crutches. The crutches should never be higher than your body.

REMEMBER: “UP with the good and DOWN with the bad”

Going upstairs:

- Face the stairs and bring your unaffected foot close to the step.
- Put your weight through the handgrips (and rail, if available). Lift your unaffected leg onto the step. Remember: Do **NOT** put any weight through your affected leg.
- Straighten your unaffected leg and bring the crutches up onto the same step.



Going downstairs:

- Face the stairs and bring both feet close to the step.
- Move your crutches and affected leg down to the lower step. Remember to keep your affected leg off of the step.
- Step down with your unaffected leg by taking weight through the handgrips (and rail, if available). Remember not to put any weight through your affected leg.



Alternate method if balance or safety concerns:

If you are unable to manage the stairs using crutches, you could try going up and down the steps on your buttocks.

- Use the railing and/or your support person to maintain your balance as you lower yourself onto the second or third step. Remember: Keep your affected leg off of the floor.
- Push yourself up on your buttocks step by step using your arms and unaffected leg until you reach the top step. Do **not** put any weight through your affected leg.
- At this point you will need to have a stool and/or a chair to lift yourself using your arms and unaffected leg onto before standing to an upright position safely. Keep your affected leg off of the floor the entire time.
- Once you are standing on your unaffected leg and have balanced yourself, place your crutches appropriately.

ENTERING/EXITING A VEHICLE

Getting into a Car:

- Have someone open the door and move the seat back as far as they can.
- Back up until you feel the edge of the seat. Grab the back rest with one hand and the hand grips of the crutches with the other.
- Bend forward slightly to avoid bumping head on car. Sit down using your unaffected leg to bear your weight. Then put the heel of your unaffected leg on the car frame and push back. Slide back in the seat until your affected leg can be swung into the car.

Getting Out of a Car:

- Have someone open the door.
- Swing your legs out of the car.
- Grab the back rest or car frame with one hand and the hand grips of your crutches with the other.
- Stand up using your unaffected leg to bear your weight, remember to not to put any weight through your affected leg.

**Reprinted (or revised) with permission. Patient Education, Copyright, Rehab Services, OSUMC
January 25, 2010 (2003), The Ohio State University Medical Center, Columbus, Ohio
All rights reserved. The Ohio State University Medical Center is not responsible for any
consequences resulting from the use or misuse of the information on this handout.**