



Patient Information

YOU AND YOUR CRUTCHES

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PATIENTS WITH CRUTCHES

You and Your Crutches

Because of your particular injury, you have been fitted with crutches in order to allow the injured part time to heal. This is a reminder to you of the correct way to use these crutches.

Fitting

The top of the crutch should be approximately one inch below your arm-pit and the hand piece should be at your wrist when your arms are straight. Be sure to daily tighten the screws at the lower end and hand grips.

Weight-Bearing Status

The amount of weight which you are allowed to bear through your affected leg may vary depending on your injury. The following instructions describe crutch walking when the affected leg is not allowed to bear any weight.

Non Weight-Bearing Use

Your hands do all of the work! Your hands provide the necessary support, not the top of the crutches. Hug the crutches to your sides with your upper arms. This makes sure that the crutches will not slip out from under you. Move the crutches forward, approximately one foot. Swing your body through, with your hands taking the weight, landing with your good foot touching the floor, slightly ahead of the crutches.

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Stair Walking

The crutches should always be lower than your body. If at all possible, use a railing in one hand and both crutches in the other hand while going up and down stairs.

Going Upstairs

- lift your good leg onto the next step
- follow with the crutches and affected leg

Going Downstairs

- place the crutches on the lower step
- hang your affected leg over the lower step
- follow with your good leg

Other Weight Bearing Use

If you have been instructed to ‘Weight Bear as Tolerated’, then place your affected foot down with each step forward with the crutches. Take as much weight as your leg will comfortably allow. You may wean yourself off the crutches when you feel able.

If you were instructed to do ‘protected weight-bearing’, you may put as much weight as is comfortable through your affected leg, but you may not wean yourself off crutches. Continue to use your crutches when you walk until your doctor tells you that you may walk without crutches.

Stairs for Weight-Bearing

Use the stair instructions described above, but place your affected leg on the same step as your crutches.

Walk slowly and carefully with your crutches. Be careful of wet or slippery surfaces and objects such as scatter rugs. Regularly check the crutch tips for wear and replace them as necessary.

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