

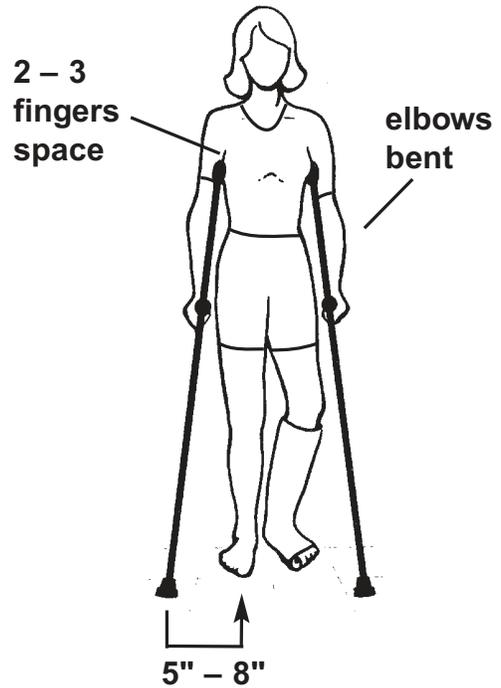
# How To Use Crutches

## Making Sure the Crutches Fit

Stand up straight with the crutches 5”–8” to the side of your feet.

The crutches are the correct length if there are 2 to 3 finger widths between the top of the crutch pad and your armpit.

The hand grip should be at wrist level when your arm is hanging by your side. Your elbows are slightly bent as you push down on the handgrips.



## Walking With Crutches

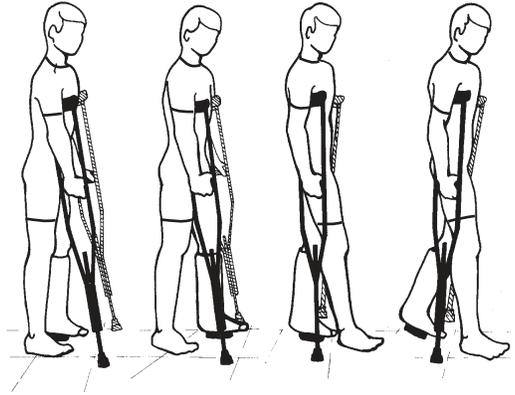
**Remember:** Support your weight with the hand grips, **not** the crutch pads.

You will be shown one of the methods below:

<b>Non-weightbearing (NWB)</b>	No weight on your injured (sore) leg. This means that you must keep your sore leg off the floor.
<b>Feather-weightbearing (FeWB)</b>	Able to touch your toe down to the floor for balance only.
<b>Partial-weightbearing (PWB)</b>	Able to put up to half of your weight through your sore leg.
<b>Weightbearing as tolerated (WBAT)</b>	Can take most or all your weight through your sore leg.
<b>Full-weightbearing (FWB)</b>	As pain allows.

## Walking

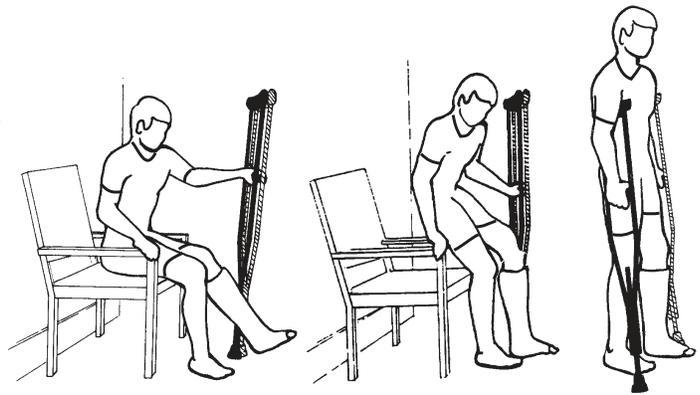
1. The crutches should be placed ahead and to the sides of your feet for the best balance.
2. Each crutch should be squeezed into your ribs by putting weight through your hands, and keeping your elbows straight.
3. Move both crutches forward at the same time.
4. Move the injured leg forward between the crutches.
5. Move your uninjured (good) leg ahead of the crutches.
6. Repeat these steps to keep walking – crutches, sore leg, good leg.



**Note: Do not lean on crutch tops.**

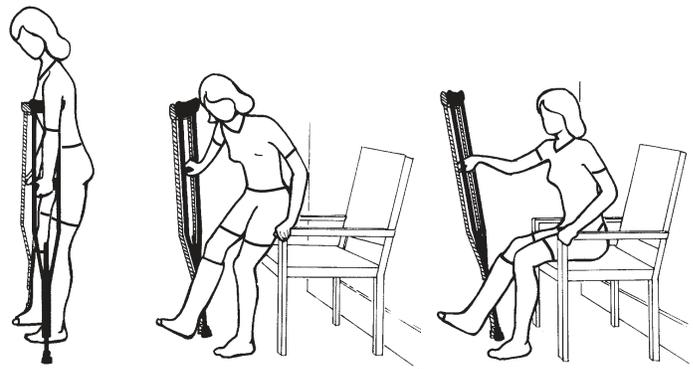
## Standing Up

1. Make sure the chair is steady before you try to stand.
2. Move forward to the edge of the chair so your good foot is flat on the floor.
3. Hold the crutches by the handgrips in one hand. Hold the armrest of the chair (or chair seat) with the other hand.
4. Stand up, taking weight through your good leg. Transfer the crutches under your arms after you gain your balance.



## Sitting Down

1. Step backwards until the back of your good leg touches the front of the chair.
2. Keeping your weight on the good leg, remove crutches from your arms. Transfer one crutch and hold both crutches by the hand grips in one hand.
3. Hold the armrest of the chair (or chairseat) with the other hand. Slide the foot of your sore leg forward. Lower yourself gently on the chair.
4. Sit down slowly. Keep your crutches next to the chair.

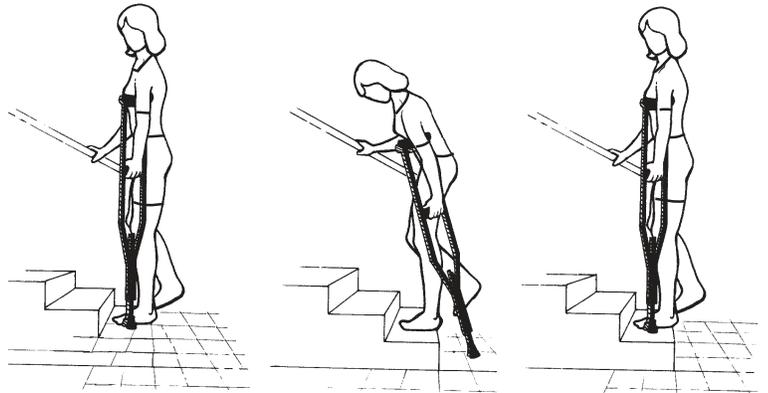


## Steps and Stairs

- If there is a handrail on the steps, use it. Put both crutches under the arm away from the railing (or hold as in diagram) and use both crutches as one.
- Hold the railing with your free hand and stand close to the rail.
- On stairs without a railing: follow the instructions for going up and down stairs, except leave one crutch under each arm (as for walking).

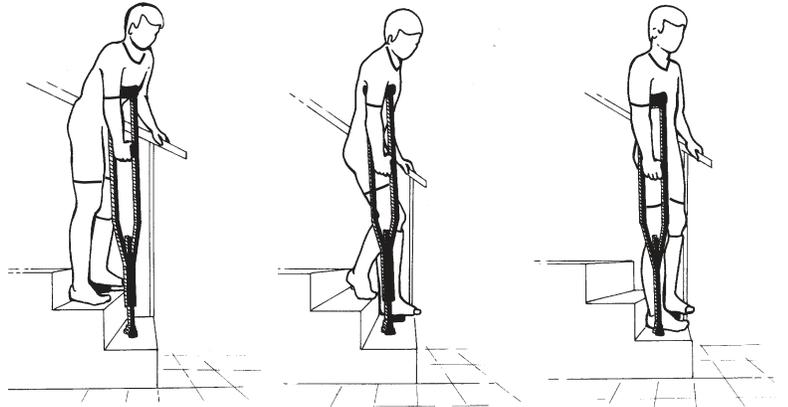
### Going Up Stairs

1. Stand close to the bottom step.
2. Put your **good** leg up first.
3. Lean forward taking your weight on your good leg.
4. Lift your injured leg and crutches up.
5. Climb one stair at a time.  
If someone is helping you, have them stand behind and to the side of you.



### Going Down the Stairs

1. Stand close to the edge of the top step.
2. Move your hand down the railing.
3. Lower your crutches, then your **sore** leg, to the next step.
4. Step down with your good leg.
5. Step down one step at a time.  
If someone is helping you, have them stand in front and to the side of you.



### Using One Crutch (Or a Cane)

Use the crutch in the hand **opposite** to the sore leg. This gives you better support and helps you walk with more normal movements.

## Using a 4-Point Gait-Style With Crutches

Only use this method if your therapist has told you to do so. You will be instructed in either **partial weightbearing** or **weightbearing as tolerated**.

### Follow these steps to walk:

1. Move your right crutch forward
2. Move your left foot forward so it is even with the right crutch.
3. Move your left crutch forward.
4. Move your right leg forward so it is even with the left crutch.
5. Repeat these steps to keep walking.

**Note: If you start with your left crutch, reverse the above order.**

### Follow the same instructions for crutch walking to:

- sit down
- stand up
- go up and down stairs

## Safety Tips

- Make sure that your crutches have rubber tips, padded shoulder pieces and hand grips. These should be kept in good condition and replaced as needed.
- It is important to use your crutches correctly. If you feel any numbness or tingling below your armpits or in your upper arms, you are probably using the crutches incorrectly.
- Never stand on your injured (sore) leg unless your doctor says you may.
- Always wear good supportive shoes or bare feet rather than slippers.
- Use a waist pouch as a purse.
- Avoid wet surfaces where possible. Use small steps if you must walk on a wet or slippery surface.
- Scatter rugs or throw mats can be very slippery on a floor. If you have any of these they should be removed.
- Your doctor or physiotherapist will tell you when you can stop using your crutches.

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*This material is for information purposes only. It should not be used in place of medical advice, instruction and/or treatment. If you have questions, speak with your doctor or appropriate healthcare provider.*