



# Crutches

Crutches should be fitted when you are in an upright, standing position. The crutches should be placed 4–6" to the front of and to the sides of your feet. Your elbows should be slight bent when you are standing straight and grasping the handgrips. The crutch pads (top of the crutch) should rest about 2–3 finger widths (2–3 inches) below your armpits.

## Walking:

- Begin by standing with your head held high and your shoulders back, with your stomach and buttocks in.
- Advance both crutches and your injured leg approximately 4–6 inches forward.
- Bear your weight through your hands, straighten your elbows and move the uninjured leg about 6–12 inches beyond the crutches, landing on your heel.
- Advance crutches and repeat the steps above.

**Never rest your weight on your underarms as this could result in damaged nerves. Weight should always be supported on the hands.**

## Weight-Bearing Ability While On Crutches:

Your doctor will give you specific instructions related to how much weight you may place on your injured leg. Examples of weight-bearing instructions might include:

- **Non-Weight-bearing** – Keep the injured leg completely off the ground at all times. Do not place any weight on the injured leg.
- **Toe Touch Weight-bearing** – To assist with balance, you may place the toes of your injured leg on the ground while walking. Remember, this is only for balance purposes. (If an egg was placed under your balancing foot, you would need to be able to step without cracking the shell.)
- **Partial Weight-bearing** – Place your injured leg on the ground to as much weight as you are allowed. This can vary from 25% to 100% of your body weight. Example: A 150-pound person who can weight-bear at 25% would be able to place about 37 pounds on the injured leg.

**Tip:** To practice partial weight-bearing, use a bathroom scale to feel that amount of pressure that you can apply to your injured leg.

## Weight-bearing as Tolerated:

You may judge how comfortable you are with putting weight on your injured leg and may use your crutches to your tolerance.

## Getting Into and Out of Chairs:

Ensure that chairs are stable and will not roll or slide. Chairs with armrests and backs are safer and easier to manage for people with leg injuries.



### **Sitting down:**

Position yourself as close to a steady chair as possible and turn so that the backs of your legs are touching the seat. Hold both crutches in the hand on your uninjured side, grasping them by the handgrip. Slide your injured leg forward while holding the seat or armrest of the chair with your hand on the injured side; slowly and gently lower yourself into the chair. Lean your crutches upside down in a handy location. (Crutches tend to fall over when they are stood on their tips.)

### **Standing up from a sitting position:**

Position your body so that you are sitting on the edge of your chair. Hold both crutches in the hand of your injured side. Keeping your injured leg close to the chair, grasp the chair seat or armrest with your hand on the uninjured side. Lean forward and press up with your arm and uninjured leg. When balanced, transfer one crutch to the other **side**.

### **Important Rules Safety and Comfort:**

- Don't look down. Look straight ahead as you normally do when you walk.
- Don't use crutches if you feel dizzy or drowsy.
- Don't walk on slippery surfaces. Avoid snowy, icy, or rainy conditions.
- Don't put any weight on your foot if your doctor has so advised.
- Do make sure your crutches have rubber tips.
- Do wear well-fitting, low-heel shoes (or shoe).
- Do position the crutch handgrips correctly
- Do keep the crutch pads 1 1/2" to 2" below your armpits
- Do take your time – walking with crutches takes coordination and effort
- Do call your doctor if you have any questions or difficulties.

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If you have any problems or questions, please feel free to call our office at (479) 582-4647 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday. If you have an emergency outside of our normal office hours, go to the nearest emergency room or call (479) 571-7810.