

# Crutches

Crutches have been recommended by your doctor, nurse practitioner, nurse or physiotherapist to help reduce or remove weight off your injured leg.

## Correct fit

When standing upright with crutches by your side:

- There should be a 2-3 finger gap between your armpit and the top of the crutch.
- The handgrip should be in line with your wrist crease when your arm is relaxed. This means there will be a slight bend in your elbows when you're using the crutches.
- When you are walking your body weight should be taken through your hands, not your armpit.

## Weight bearing

- ☐ **Non-weight bearing:** 0% of body weight through affected limb. Hold your affected/injured leg off the ground. Place the crutches in front of you. Place all your weight through your hands. Step forward to the crutches with your good leg keeping your injured leg off the ground.
- ☐ **Touch weight bearing:** Less than 10% of body weight through the affected limb. Place the crutches in front of you. Step affected/injured leg to the crutches while taking your weight through your hands. Step your good leg through to meet the other leg.
- ☐ **Partial weight bearing:** You can place \_\_\_\_% of body weight through the affected limb. Place the crutches in front of you. Step affected/injured leg to the crutches while taking your weight through your hands. Step your good leg through to meet the other leg.

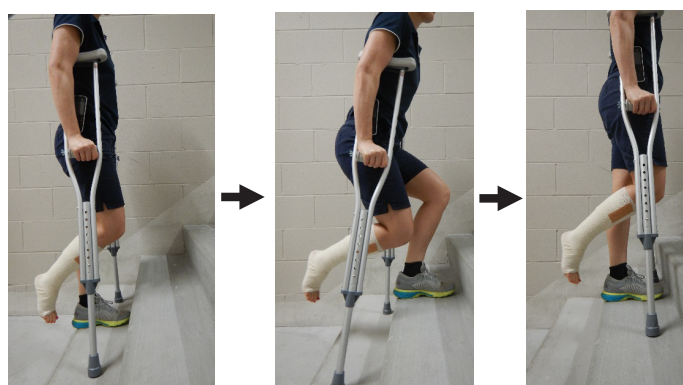
- ☐ **Weight bear as tolerated:** You can place 100% of your body weight through the effected limb. Place the crutches in front of you and step the effected limb through. Try to walk as normally as possible with one foot after the other as you are able.

## Stairs and gutters

Start close to the edge of the step. Use a handrail on one side if available. With the other hand, you can either hold both crutches together across the handgrips from the outside or hold one crutch at right angles to the one you are using.

## Stepping up

- Take weight onto your hands on the crutches
- Step up with your good leg first
- Bring your injured/affected leg up behind and bring the crutches up onto the step
- Repeat the sequence for each step – good leg, injured leg, crutches.



## Stepping Down

- Lower the crutches to the step
- Bring your affected/injured leg down between the crutches (don't take any weight through this leg if you are non-weight bearing)
- Take weight through your hands on the crutches and lower your good leg down on to the step next to your injured leg
- Repeat the sequence for each step – crutches, injured leg, good leg.



## Chairs

### Sitting Down

- Back up to the chair until you feel your good leg touch
- Remove crutches from under your arms and move both crutches to the hand on the injured/affected side and hold onto hand pieces
- Reach for chair/armrest with your other hand and place your injured/affected leg forward bend forward and gently lower yourself onto the seat.

### Standing Up

- Hold the crutches in one hand on the affected/injured side
- Push up from the chair with the other hand
- Place one crutch under each arm
- Get your balance before walking.

## Precautions

- Do not take weight through your armpits as this can cause serious damage to the blood and nerve supply to your arm
- Beware of wet floors and uneven or rocky surfaces
- Avoid wearing thongs/flip flops while using crutches
- The crutches provided are for single person use – do not give your crutches to other people
- Regularly check the rubber tips to make sure they are not wearing out
- If crutch is damaged in use discard immediately and replace. Contact the physiotherapy department on 4433 2370 if you have any questions.

## Notes

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This patient information brochure supports National Safety and Quality Health Service Standard 2 - Partnering with Consumers



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