



# Using Your Crutches

## Why use crutches?

Crutches tend to be used upon the advice of a healthcare professional following an injury. Crutches help you to walk and get around, while reducing weight on your injured leg. The amount of weight you can put on your affected leg depends on your injury – your healthcare professional will advise.

## How do I ensure that my crutches are the correct fit?

When you have made sure that you are within the weight limits of the crutches, set them up as follows:

<p><b>Underarm (Axilla) Crutches</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stand up straight and ensure that you are wearing your regular walking shoes.</li> <li>• The top of your crutches should be 1 – 2 inches below your armpits.</li> <li>• The handgrips should be level with the crease of your wrists and when you hold the handgrips, there should be a slight bend in your elbow.</li> <li>• To protect the nerves and blood vessels in your armpits, weight should be taken through the handgrips, not through the underarm supports.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Forearm (Elbow) Crutches</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stand up straight and ensure that you are wearing your regular walking shoes.</li> <li>• The handgrips should be level with the crease of your wrists and when you hold the handgrips, there should be a slight bend in your elbow.</li> <li>• The cuff should be 1 – 2 inches below the bend of your elbow.</li> </ul>	

## How do I use my crutches?

This depends on where you are using your crutches. It also depends on whether or not you are allowed to put weight through your affected leg (**non-weight bearing** or **weight bearing**).

### Walking

Non-Weight Bearing	Weight Bearing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move both crutches forward, at the same time. Do not move them too far in front of you.</li> <li>• Then hop through on your good leg, in line with the crutches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move both crutches forward. Do not move them too far in front of you.</li> <li>• Step forward with your bad leg first, level with the crutches.</li> <li>• Then step forward with your good leg.</li> </ul>


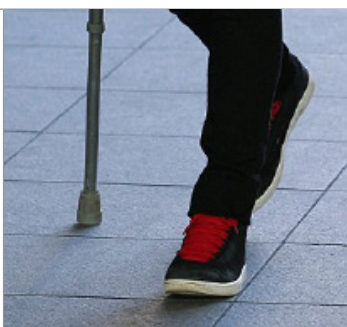


### Going Up Stairs

Non-Weight Bearing	Weight Bearing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep the crutches on the ground and hop onto the first step.</li> <li>The crutches then follow onto this step.</li> <li>Continue up the steps in this fashion.</li> <li>If there is a handrail, you should use it. You will need to hold both crutches in one hand</li> </ul> <p><b>Tip:</b> hold the spare crutch together with the handle of the crutch you are still using</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The good leg goes first, followed by the bad leg.</li> <li>The crutches come last.</li> <li>If you are using the handrail, you should use it. You will need to hold both crutches in one hand.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tip:</b> hold the spare crutch together with the handle of the crutch you are still using.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think “good leg to heaven” i.e. good leg goes <b>UP</b> first.</li> </ul>

### Going Down Stairs

Non-Weight Bearing	Weight Bearing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring the crutches down first.</li> <li>Make sure that you are balanced, and bring your good leg onto the step.</li> <li>Continue up the steps in this fashion.</li> <li>If you are using the handrail, you should use it. You will need to hold both crutches in one hand.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tip:</b> hold the spare crutch together with the handle of the crutch you are still using.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring the crutches down first.</li> <li>The bad leg goes first, followed by the good leg.</li> <li>If you are using the handrail, you should use it. You will need to hold both crutches in one hand.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tip:</b> hold the spare crutch together with the handle of the crutch you are still using.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think “bad leg to hell” i.e. bad leg goes <b>DOWN</b> first.</li> </ul>

Here are some tips:

			
<p>Always ensure that screws are tight and secure, and that rubber tips are not worn.</p>	<p>For your safety, wear supportive, non-slip shoes when using your crutches.</p>	<p>When sitting down, always feel for the chair at the back of your thighs, before lowering yourself down.</p>	<p>Liaise with your healthcare professional to safely learn how to use your crutches.</p>