

## General Post-Operative Information for Outpatients

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING CRUTCHES



This brochure is designed to help you use crutches properly and safely. Please continue to use them until further notice from a physician or physiotherapist.

### Special Points to Remember

- Good crutch tips are important for good suction. Avoid worn out crutch tips, which can cause you to slip or fall.
- Padding is available for the crutch tops and hand piece if your chest wall or hands become sore. You can purchase special crutch pads from drugstores or tape an old towel or foam around the crutch for padding.
- Special picks can be purchased from some pharmacies to put on the bottom of the crutch; they are designed for walking on ice during the winter.

## Height Adjustments

- It is essential that crutches are the right length to ensure safety as well as efficiency. The top of the crutches should be two to three inches below the armpit. This is the approximate width of three fingers.
- The handgrip should be adjusted so that your elbow is slightly bent when you walk. The proper height of the handgrip is at the level of the wrist crease when the arms are hanging at the side of the body.

Note: Make sure that the crutches are adjusted to the right size after padding them, and when wearing the shoes you will be walking in.

## Use of Crutches

- The crutches should be held close to your body. Use your arms to hold them close to your chest.
- Place all your weight on your hands when walking. DO NOT lean on the bar; this can cause pressure on a nerve root and also cut off circulation.
- Crutches should be placed just to the front and slightly out to the side for walking.
- Take small steps and take your time.

## Use for Non-Weight Bearing

- The affected leg does not touch the floor. Swing both crutches forward. Rest the body weight on crutches and swing leg forward.

## Use for Protected Weight Bearing

- The crutches and affected leg always move forward together.

## Use on Stairs

- For optimum safety the use of a railing or banister and one crutch is recommended.

## Climbing Stairs

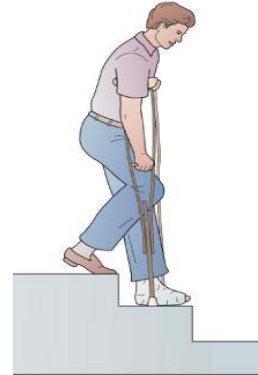
- Face the stairs and place the crutches close to the first step.
- Remember that the “good go up.” Take a small step up with your good leg. Both crutches and the affected leg remain on the floor.

- Then raise crutches and affected leg to the first step. Repeat one step at a time.



## Descending Stairs

- Face the stairs with your good leg close to the edge of the top step.
- Remember that the “bad go down.” Lower both crutches and your affected leg down onto the first step, while keeping all your weight on the good leg.
- Repeat one step at a time



## Sitting on a Chair

- Approach the chair, then turn around and back up to the edge of the chair, keeping your affected leg forward.
- Balance yourself on your good leg as you remove the crutches by the hand pieces in front of you.
- Put both crutches in one hand. Hold onto the chair with the other hand. Bend the knees of your good leg and slowly lower yourself to sit down.

## Getting up from a Chair



- Use your good leg to help you rise to standing.
- As you get up, always keep one hand on the chair.

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