

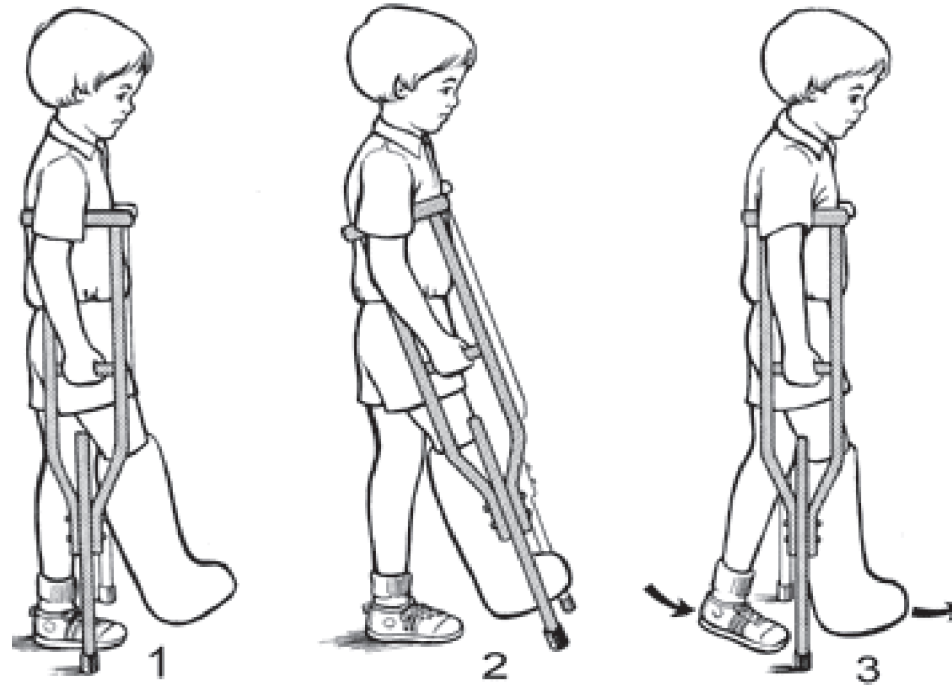
The Right Height and Fit

- Stand holding the handgrip: there should be a 3-finger space between the top of the crutches and the armpit.
- Stand with arms hanging loosely at your side: the handgrip should line up with the wrist crease.

Carrying Body weight

Your doctor will tell you how much weight your injured leg can carry.

- Non-Weight Bearing: keep the injured leg and foot off the floor at all times. The injured leg may take longer to heal if it carries any body weight.
- Touch/Feather-Weight Bearing: you can rest the toes of the injured leg on the floor for balance. Do not carry body weight on it.
- Partial-Weight Bearing: the injured leg can take a little (not all) of your weight on the foot.
- Weight Bearing as Tolerated: the injured leg can take as much weight as feels comfortable to begin with. Gradually you will take all your weight on that leg.



Walking on a Flat Surface

Move your crutches and your injured leg together. Each step has three stages.

1. Grasp the handgrips on the crutches (keep your elbows bent). Clamp your elbows into your side. Stand up straight. Relax and drop your shoulders.
2. Balance, and then move both crutches, together with your injured leg, a little ahead of you.
3. With the crutches firmly on the floor:

Non-Weight-bearing: Share all of your weight between your arms, push down on your hands and straighten your elbows, hop forward slightly ahead of the crutches.

Touch/Feather Weight bearing: Share most of your weight between your arms, lightly touch the foot of your injured leg as you hop forward slightly ahead of your crutches. **DO NOT** put any weight on your injured leg.

Partial-weight bearing: Share most of your weight between your arms. Rest a small amount of weight on the foot of your injured leg as you

hop forward slightly ahead of the crutches.

Weight bearing as tolerated: Share most of your weight between your arms. Rest a small amount of weight on the foot of your injured leg to begin with as you hop forward slightly ahead of the crutches. Gradually increase amount of weight on your foot as feels comfortable.

Walking Up Stairs

Always use a handrail and one crutch. Practice with an adult at first.

1. Stand between the handrail and crutch with the injured leg bent up and a little behind you.
2. With crutch firmly on the floor, push down with your hands and straighten your elbows. This lifts your body up off the floor as you hop up onto the next step.
3. Balance, then bring the crutch and the injured leg up onto the same step. Take care to clear your toes!
4. Repeat for each step up the stairs.

Remember: Up with the good leg; down with the bad.

Walking Down Stairs

Always use a handrail and one crutch. Practice with an adult at first.

1. Face the stairs fully.
2. Stand and balance. Put the crutch down one step. Move the injured leg out in front of you.
3. Take the weight on your hands, and straighten your elbows. Step down on the uninjured leg to join the crutch.
4. Repeat for each step down the stairs.

Remember: Up with the good leg; down with the bad.

If there is no handrail you may use two crutches with adult supervision. Alternately, you may go up and down on your bottom with an adult supporting your leg.

More Helpful Safety Tips

1. *To balance while you stand.* Put the rubber tips of both the crutches slightly ahead of your foot.
2. Stand up straight. Carry all your weight on your hands rather than

your armpits. This prevents nerve damage.

3. Always press down on your hands to straighten your elbows. This makes sure the crutches stay firmly on the ground.
4. The safety tips, on the crutches, stop slips. Be sure they fit properly. Replace them when they wear out.
5. Tighten the wing nuts on the crutches every day.
6. Be extra careful on wet or slippery floors and steps. If there is snow or ice on the ground you can buy “ice picks” that fit onto your crutches.

Give yourself lots of time to get about. You will soon get the hang of it!

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How to Use Crutches



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