

- Face stairs and place crutches to first step
- Push on handgrip of crutches, straightening elbows. Put stronger leg up onto first step.
- Straighten stronger leg then lift both crutches and weaker leg up to same step, taking weight on it or not as allowed.

2. With one crutch and handrail on right.
  - Hold right hand crutch in left hand, gripping it just below handgrip, then proceed as above.

**GOING DOWNSTAIRS**

1. With two crutches
  - Stand with toes and both legs close to the edge of step
  - Put both crutches and weaker leg on to lower step, taking weight on it or not as allowed, while bending knee of stronger leg as much as possible, to assist balance.
  - Lean on handgrip of crutches and put stronger leg on same step
2. With one crutch
  - Arrange crutches as for going upstairs.

**SITTING DOWN IN A CHAIR**

1. Stand with back of stronger leg touching front of chair seat.
2. Remove crutches from underarms and hold them both by handgrip in one hand
3. Lean forward, bending knee of stronger leg and using free hand for support on arm or side of chair.
4. Sit down

**GETTING UP FROM CHAIR**

Reverse procedure as described above. Lean well forward, keeping stronger leg as far back as possible, i.e. knee well bent while getting up.



# CRUTCHES

## Patient Information



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## CRUTCHES

The doctor has ordered crutches for you. Please note the following:

- ☐ You ARE allowed to put as much weight on your injured leg as you can tolerate.
- ☐ You are NOT allowed to put weight on your injured leg.

### SIZE

1. The tops of the crutches should be 1 to 1 1/2 inches below your armpits.
2. Handgrips can be reached with your arms straight (without bending the elbow or putting weight in armpits).

### SAFETY AND COMFORT TIPS

1. TIGHTEN screws and wing nuts DAILY.
2. Be sure crutches have GOOD RUBBER TIPS to prevent sliding.
3. **DO NOT USE ON WET OR ICY SURFACES**
  - Dry crutch tips when wet.
  - Ice grips can be purchased for icy surfaces.
4. Weight should be supported by your hands.  
**DO NOT SUPPORT WEIGHT ON ARMPITS AS THIS CAN CAUSE PERMANENT NERVE DAMAGE.**

Follow-up with your family doctor in 1 week if directed to do so.

There is a charge for the crutches. Arrange with the receptionist to pay now, or be billed.

### USING CRUTCHES

#### **MEASUREMENT OF AUXILIARY CRUTCHES**

Adults – subtract 16 inches from patients height.

Children – with patient standing with arms by his side, measure from 1 1/2 inches below armpit (posterior) to ground, 4 inches away from outer side of shoes that patient normally wears. The handgrips of the crutches should be at a height which allow elbows to be bent at about 30°.

#### **MEASUREMENT OF ELBOW CRUTCHES**

Adult and children – measure from position of hand by side when elbow is 30° bent, with patient standing upright, to ground 4 inches away from side of foot.

#### **HOW TO USE AUXILIARY CRUTCHES**

Body weight is transmitted through hands by extending elbows and not by leaning on armpits. Top of crutches should be pressed against sides of chest.

#### **HOW TO USE ELBOW CRUTCHES**

Body weight is transmitted through hands by extending elbows, keeping arms well into sides.

#### **GAITS**

1. For patients who are incapable of moving their legs individually

##### A) **Swing-To**

- put both crutches in front of the body
- swing legs between crutches, landing heels first.

##### B) **Swing-Through**

A quicker gait but should be attempted only patients whose balance is well-established.

- put both crutches in front of body
- Swing legs through beyond crutches, landing heels first

2. For patients who can take full weight with both legs and who are unsteady and therefore need a wide base of support

##### **Four-Point Gait**

- Advance left crutch
- Advance right leg
- Advance right crutch
- Advance left leg

3. For patients who can take full-weight on both legs and who are steadier than those who require a four-point gait,

##### **Two-Point Gait**

- Advance right crutch and left leg
- Advance left crutch and right leg

4. For patients who can take full-weight on one leg and have to take varying degrees of weight on affected leg.

##### **Three-Point Gait**

A) Partial weight bearing (e.g. if right leg is affected)

- Advance crutches and right leg together with body weight shared between crutches and right leg, while left leg is brought through in front of crutches.

B) Non weight bearing (e.g. if right leg is affected)

- Advance crutches and right leg together with no weight on right leg. Body weight is taken entirely by hands on crutches, while left leg is brought through in front of crutches.

#### **GOING UPSTAIRS**

Always go up stairs with stronger leg first. Always go down with weaker leg and crutches first.

1. With two crutches