



Patient & Family Guide
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Using Your Walking Aid



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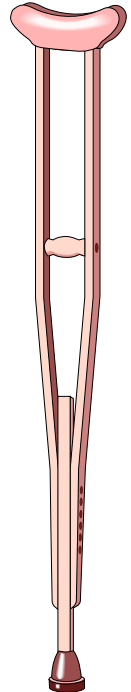
Using a walking aid (like a cane, crutches, or a walker) will help you lower the amount of weight you put on your leg or let you avoid putting weight on your leg.

Your primary health care provider will tell you how much weight you can put on your affected leg.

Using crutches

To properly fit crutches to your height:

- Stand tall with the bottom of the crutch 6 inches (16 cm) from the sides of your feet.
- There should be about 2 inches (5 cm) or 3 finger widths between your armpits and the top of your crutches.
- The hand supports should be at the level of your wrist, where your watch would be. When you grasp the handles, your elbows should be slightly bent.



- Always put your weight down through your hands. **Do not put the tops of the crutches into your armpits.** If you feel any tingling or numbness in your upper body or arms, you are probably using the crutches incorrectly or they may be the wrong size.
- When standing, keep the crutches slightly in front of you. This will help give you better balance.

How to crutch-walk without putting weight on your affected leg:

1. Stand straight with your weight on your non-affected leg and your affected leg off the ground.
2. Hold crutches in place at your sides.
3. Support your weight with your hands.
4. Move the crutches forward.
5. Take a small hop forward with your non-affected leg.
6. Repeat.

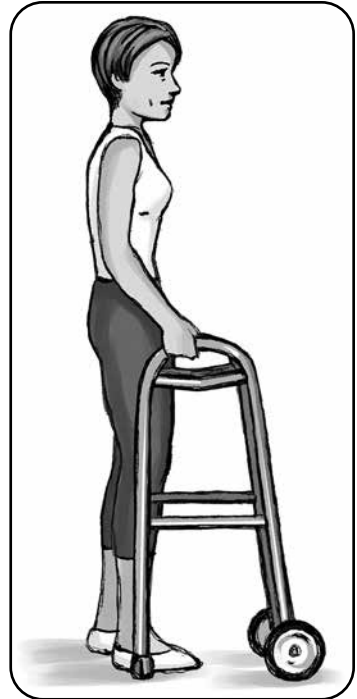
How to crutch-walk putting weight on your affected leg:

1. Stand straight with your weight on your non-affected leg and some weight on your affected leg.
2. Hold crutches in place at your sides.
3. Support your weight with your hands.
4. Move the crutches forward.
5. Take a small step with your affected leg.
6. Put your weight on the crutches and on your affected leg, then step forward with your non-affected leg.
7. Repeat.

Using a walker

To properly fit a walker to your height:

- Stand tall inside the walker so that the sides are next to your legs.
- The hand supports should be at the level of your wrist, where your watch would be. When you grasp the handles, your elbow should be slightly bent.



Note: Your walker should have 4 legs, or 2 wheels and 2 legs. 4-wheeled walkers are not safe if you are not able to put weight on both legs.

How to use a walker without putting weight on your affected leg:

1. Stand straight with your weight on your non-affected leg and your affected leg off the ground.
2. Put your walker in front of you so that your non-affected leg is in the frame of the walker.
3. Use your hands to support your weight.
4. Move the walker forward.
5. Take a small hop forward with your non-affected leg into the frame of the walker.
6. Repeat.

How to use a walker putting weight on your affected leg:

1. Stand straight with your weight on your non-affected leg and some weight on your affected leg.
2. Put your walker in front of you so that your legs are in the frame of the walker.
3. Support your weight with your hands.
4. Move the walker forward.
5. Put your affected leg on the ground in the middle of the walker frame.
6. Put your weight on the walker and on your affected leg, then step forward with your non-affected leg.
7. Repeat.

How to increase the amount of weight on your affected leg

Partial weight bearing

Your primary health care provider or physiotherapist will tell you if you are only allowed to put a certain amount of weight on your leg (such as 25%, 50%, or 75% weight bearing). **This means that you cannot put all of your weight on your affected leg.**

For example:

If you weigh 200 pounds and your primary health care provider told you that you can be 25% weight bearing, then you can put 50 lbs of weight on your affected leg. You can test this by using a scale.

Weight bearing as tolerated

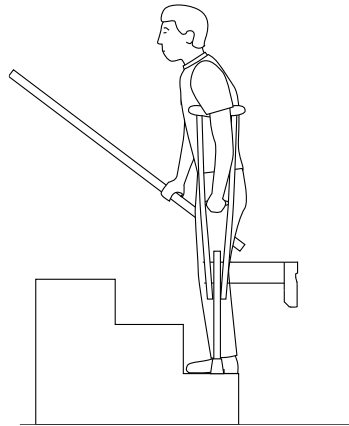
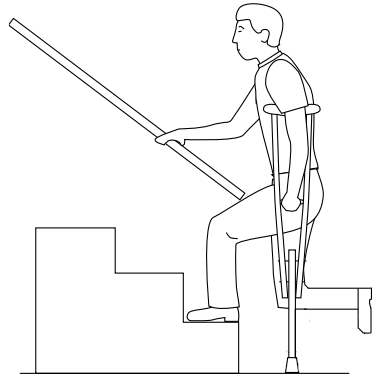
If you have been told it is OK to weight bear as tolerated, you can slowly increase the amount of weight on your affected leg over time (until you are able to put full weight on your leg). You may still need a walking aid, such as a crutch or cane, until your strength and range of motion return to normal.

Using crutches or a cane on stairs

Make sure that the stair railing is solid. Go slowly to avoid losing your balance.

How to go up stairs without putting weight on your affected leg:

1. Stand at the bottom of the stairs, and shift your crutches or cane to one hand so that you can hold the rail.
2. Grasp the railing firmly with one hand and support your weight on your crutches or cane with the other hand.
3. Hop up onto the first step with your non-affected leg, supporting your weight through the crutches or cane and the railing.
4. Adjust your grip on the railing and move the crutches or cane up to the step that you are standing on.
5. Repeat.



How to go down stairs without putting weight on your affected leg:

To get down the stairs remember that you always move the crutches or cane first and then your affected leg.

1. Stand at the top of the stairs, and shift your crutches or cane to one hand, so that you can hold the railing.
2. Grasp the railing firmly with one hand and support your weight on the crutches or cane with the other hand.
3. Slide your hand down the rail slightly, then move the crutches or cane down one step. Hop down with your non-affected leg, supporting your weight through the crutches or cane and the railing.
4. Repeat.

How to go up stairs putting weight on your affected leg:

1. Stand at the bottom of the stairs, and shift your crutches or cane to one hand so that you can hold the railing.
2. Grasp the railing firmly with one hand and support your weight on the crutches or cane with the other hand.
3. Step up onto the first step with your non-affected leg, supporting your weight through the crutches or cane and the railing.
4. Bring your affected leg up to the same step as your non-affected leg.
5. Adjust your grip on the railing and move the crutches or cane up onto the step that you are standing on.
6. Repeat.



How to go down stairs putting weight on your affected leg:

To get down the stairs, remember that you always move the crutches first and then your affected leg.

1. Stand at the top of the stairs, and shift your crutches or cane to one hand, so that you can hold the railing.
2. Grasp the railing firmly with one hand and support your weight on the crutches or cane with the other hand.
3. Slide your hand down the railing slightly then move the crutches down one step. Step down with your affected leg, supporting your weight through the crutches or cane and the railing.
4. Step down to the same step with your non-affected leg.
5. Repeat.



Getting up and down from a chair using crutches or a walker

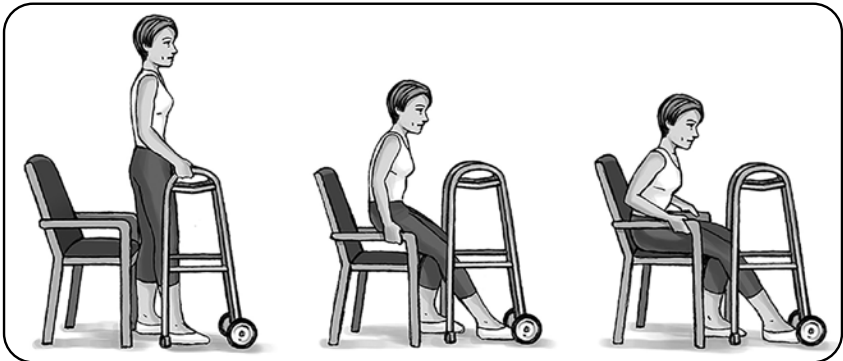
Make sure the chair is sturdy and has arms. Do not sit in a chair that has wheels or in a chair that is too low.

How to sit down using crutches:

1. Slowly move backward until you feel the back of your knees touch the front edge of the chair.
2. Move your crutches to the hand that is next to your affected leg.
3. Support your weight on the crutches.
4. Reach back with your other hand and grasp the chair arm.
5. Move your affected leg out in front.
6. Slowly lower yourself into the chair.

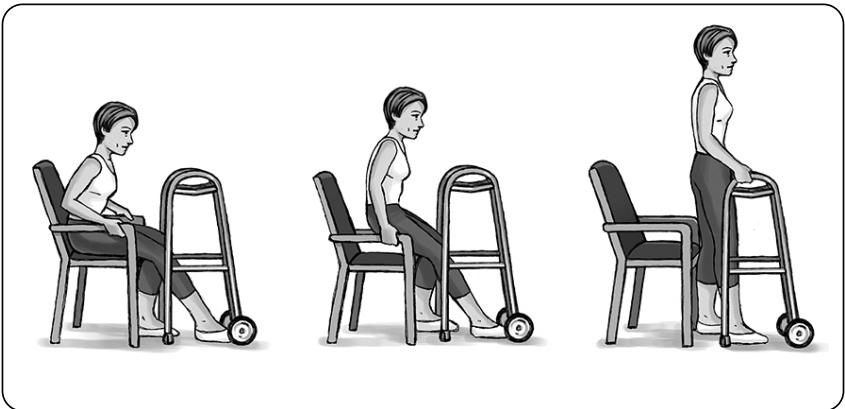
How to sit down using a walker:

1. Support your weight on the walker using your hand on your affected side.
2. Reach back with the other hand and grasp the chair arms.
3. Move your affected leg out in front and slowly lower yourself into the chair.
4. Once sitting, raise your affected leg on a chair or pillow.



How to stand up using a walker:

1. Move to the edge of the chair.
2. Bend your non-affected leg under you to hold your body weight.
3. Slide your affected leg forward.
4. Push down with your hands on the armrests, and raise your body to stand up. Put most of your weight on your non-affected leg.
5. Once you have your balance, use your walker.



Notes:

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Prepared by: Physiotherapy

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.