

Crutches

Why do I need crutches?

Crutches are used to help keep weight off your injured or weak foot or leg so it can heal. They must be adjusted to the right length for you to use safely.

How long should my crutches be?

Check the fit (length) as follows:

1. Stand up tall with each crutch 6 inches out from your side and 6 inches in front of your foot. There should be about 2 inches of space (2 or 3 fingers' width) between the top of the crutches and your armpits. Be sure your shoulders are relaxed. Correct fit helps prevent pressure and nerve damage.



2. Stand tall, look straight ahead, and hang your arms at your sides. The handgrips on the crutches should be level with your wrists. (Elbows should be slightly bent when your hands are on the handgrips.)



3. If the crutches do not fit, contact the place where you received them.

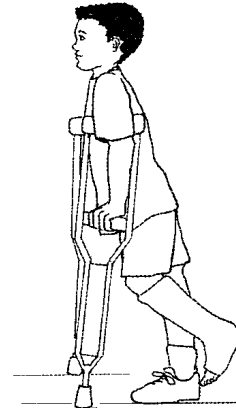
How much weight can I put on my leg?

Put only as much weight on your hurt leg (___ left ___ right) as directed by your doctor (see chart below):

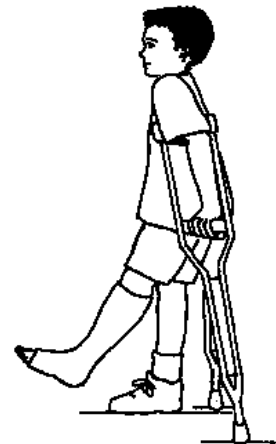
Doctor's directions	This means
Non-weight-bearing	No stepping on hurt leg
Minimal weight-bearing	Very light step
Toe touch	Place front of foot down only, using a light step
Partial weight-bearing	Put about half of your weight on hurt leg
Weight-bearing to tolerance	Let comfort guide how much weight to apply

How do I walk with crutches?

1. Stand tall with good posture. Look ahead, not down at the floor.
2. Step forward with the crutches (and your hurt leg if some weight bearing is allowed) hands supporting your weight on your crutches.



3. Step past the crutch tips with your strong leg.

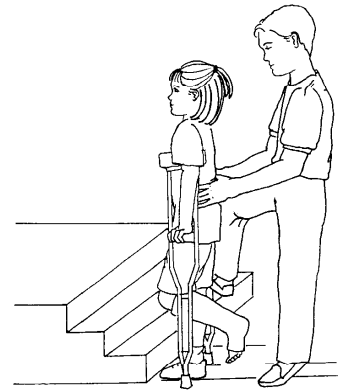


Repeat 2 and 3.

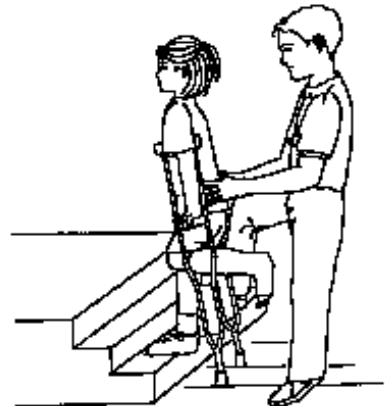
How should I go up and down stairs?

Going upstairs without a handrail: "Foot first going up"

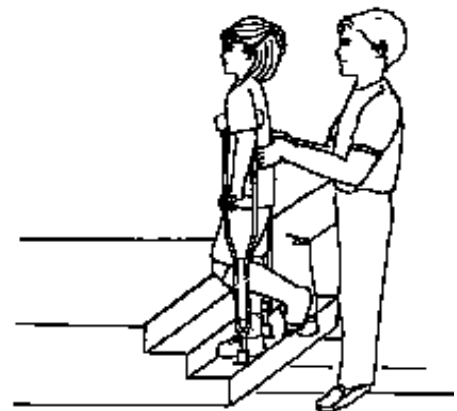
If you need help, someone should stand behind you, with feet wide apart and on separate steps to be stable.



1. Push down on the crutches and step up with the strong leg.



2. Bring your crutches and hurt leg up to the same step.



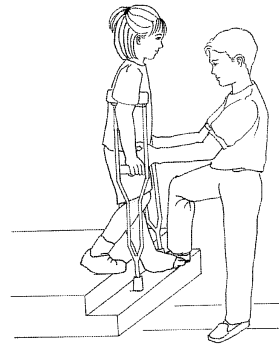
3. Continue with each step.



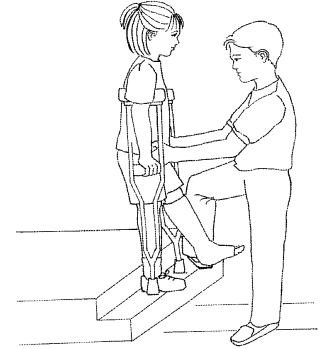
Going downstairs without a handrail: "Crutches first going down"

If you need help, someone should stand in front of you, with feet wide apart and on separate steps to be stable.

1. Step down with the crutches (and the hurt leg if some weight bearing is allowed).



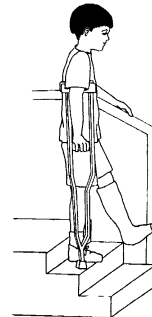
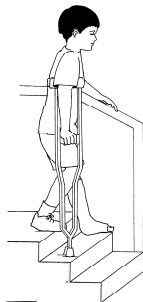
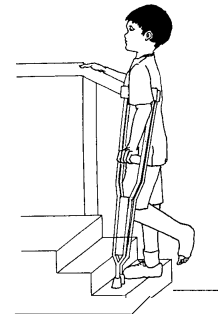
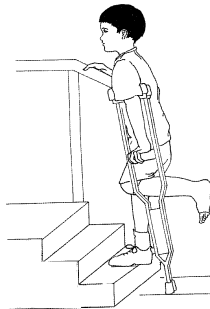
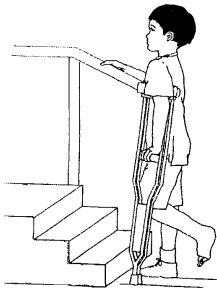
2. Step down to the same step with the strong leg.



3. Continue with each step.

Stairs with a handrail

Put your hand on the handrail. With your other arm, use both crutches as have someone carry your spare crutch for you. Use the same pattern described above.

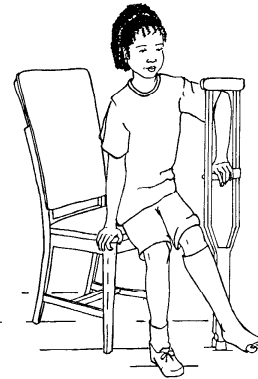


If you have trouble holding the crutches together as shown above, try crossing them like the letter "T."



How should I sit down?

1. Back up until you feel the chair at the back of your leg.
2. Take the crutches from under your arms.
Put both crutches in the hand on your injured side, holding at the handgrip (see picture).
3. Reach back for the chair seat or arm with the other hand.
4. Sit down slowly.

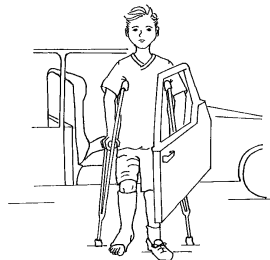


How do I get up?

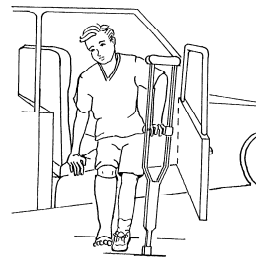
1. Hold both crutches by the chair on your injured side (see picture above).
2. Slide to the edge of the chair.
3. Push down on the seat or arm of the chair and use the strong leg to stand up.
4. When you are standing with good balance, then put the crutches under your arms.

How should I get into the car?

1. Back up to the edge of the seat.



2. Sit down as described above.



3. Then pivot around, bringing your legs into the car.



To get out, pivot to bring your legs out of the car.
Then stand up as if from a chair.

What else do I need to know?

Never lean on the tops of the crutches with your armpits.

Take extra care on ice, in wet weather, around scatter rugs or small pets, or in other situations when you could fall.

Wear comfortable shoes with a “good grip” sole. A “broken in” favorite pair of shoes is best. Do not wear sandals or slippers.

Do not play with your crutches or allow others to do so.

Check your crutches now and then.

- Are the tips free of dirt or rocks?
- Have the tips worn out?
- Are all wing-nuts and buttons tight?

Questions?

These instructions are not specific to your child, but provide general information. If you have any questions, please call your child’s doctor or physical therapist.

For more reading material about this and other health topics, please call or visit the Family Resource Center library, or visit our website: www.childrensmn.org/A-Z.

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Last reviewed 5/2013

