

Using crutches

Using and fitting crutches begins on page 2.

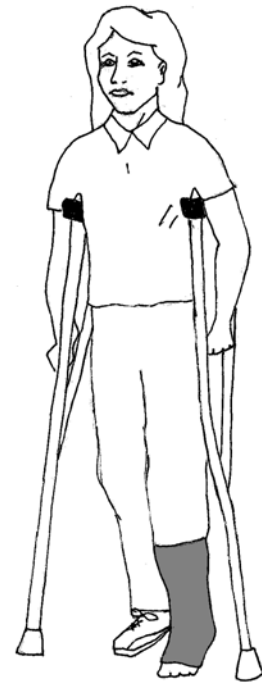
Your doctor or physiotherapist has told you how much weight you are allowed to place on your leg.

Partial weight bearing begins on page 4.

Non-weight bearing begins on page 9.

Crutches after surgery

If you need crutches after surgery, you will need to buy or rent them before surgery.



Safety first!

- Take your time all the time.
- Take extra care in wet or slippery areas.
- Remove any small mats that may be slippery.
- Be careful when moving from one surface to another, such as moving from a rug to a tile floor.
- Take small steps in a circle to turn around. Do not turn quickly on your good leg.
- Wear low-heeled supportive shoes. Changing heel heights affects the fit of your crutches.
- Use a handrail any time there is one.
- Do not put your weight through the top of your crutches.



IFitting crutches

The tops of the crutches should be 3 finger widths below your arm.

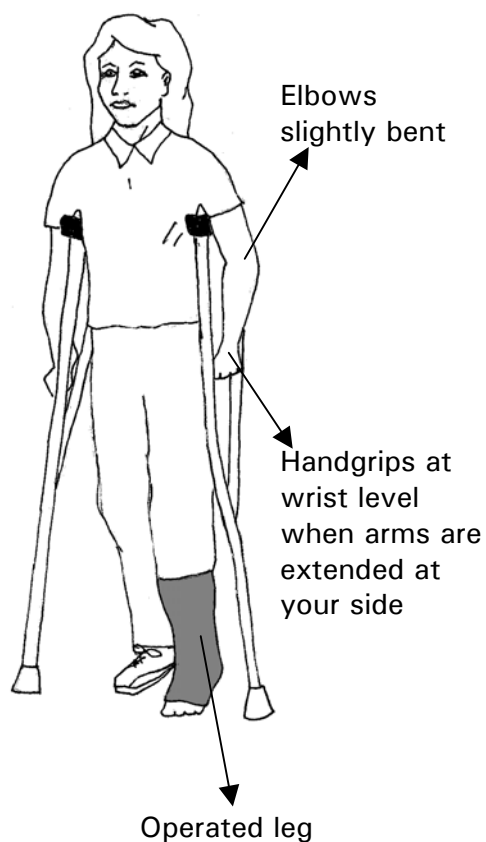
The handgrips should be at wrist level when your arms are at your sides.

Do not lean on your crutches as this can injure the nerves under your arms.

To support your weight through your hands, when you walk or stand, try to squeeze the crutches to your side.

Hold the crutches close to your body – about 6 inches (15 cm) from each foot.

Check the screws, wing nuts and crutch tips every day to make sure they are secure.



**In this pamphlet,
the shaded leg is
the operated or
injured leg.**

Standing up

- Hold both crutches by the handgrips in one hand next to the injured leg.
- Slide forward to the edge of the seat and push up from the seat with your free hand and good leg.
- Steady yourself and put one crutch under each arm.

Sitting down

- Touch the edge of the seat with the back of your legs before sitting down.
 - Remove both crutches from under your arms. Position the crutches next to the injured leg and grip both handles with one hand.
 - Use your free hand to reach for an armrest.
 - Use the armrest to sit down slowly.
 - Slide your injured leg forward and sit down slowly.
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Partial weight bearing

Walking

- You can put some weight on your injured leg. Put only as much weight on your injured leg as you have been advised.
- Put one crutch under each arm.
- Grip the crutch handles firmly.
- Your injured leg can be on the ground.
- Take your weight through your hands by squeezing the crutches to your side.
- Bring the crutches and injured leg forward together.
- Lean forward taking your weight through your hands. Do not put weight on the top of the crutches.
- Step through with your good leg.

Checking how much weight to put on your leg

Use a bathroom scale to see how much weight you are using.

For example, you have been told that you can put 50% of your weight on your injured leg. You weigh 90 kg or 200 lbs. Stand with your crutches. Put your injured leg on the scale and press down until you reach 45 kg or 100 lbs. This gives you the correct feel for partial weight bearing.

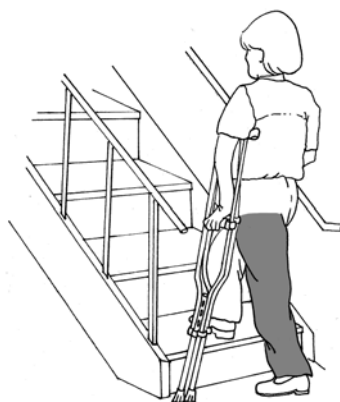
Using stairs, curbs and steps



Partial weight bearing – going UP with a handrail

Going up – The good leg steps up first. Then the crutches and the injured leg follow together.

- Face the step with both crutches under the arm away from the handrail.
- Stand close to the step.
- Put your other hand on the handrail.
- Put your weight on the handrail and the crutches.
- Step up with your good leg.
- Straighten your good leg and bring the crutches and the injured leg step up together.



Partial weight bearing – going DOWN with a handrail

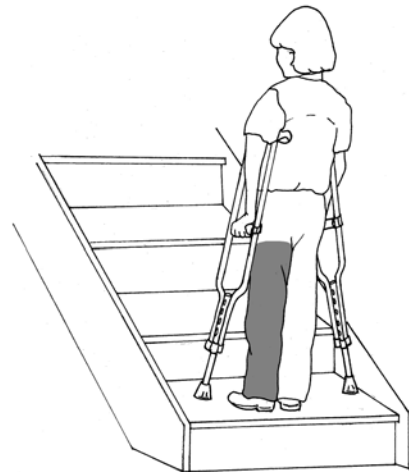
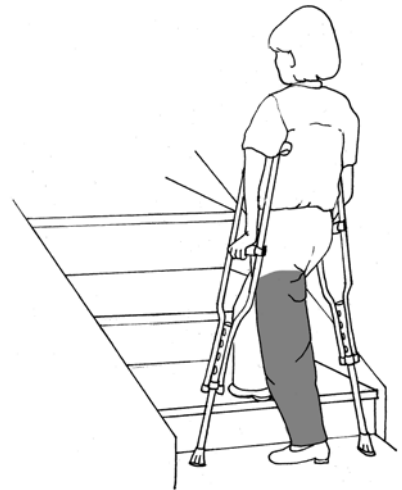
Going down – The crutches and the injured leg down first. Then the crutches and the good leg follow.

- Face the step with both crutches under the arm away from the handrail.
- Stand close to the edge.
- Put your other hand on the handrail.
- Put crutches in the middle of the next lower step, followed carefully by the injured leg.
- Step down with the good leg.



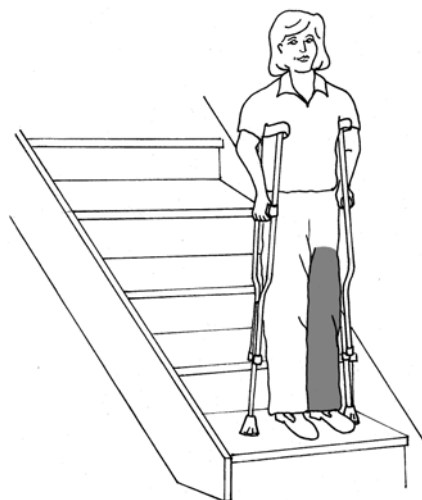
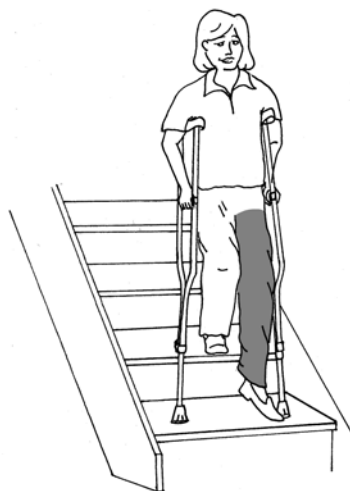
Partial weight bearing – going UP without a handrail

- Face the step with one crutch under each arm.
- Stand close to the step.
- Put your weight on the crutch handles.
- Step up with your good leg.
- Straighten your good leg and bring the crutches and the injured leg up together.



Partial weight bearing – going DOWN without a handrail

- Face the step with one crutch under each arm.
- Stand close to the step.
- Put crutches in the middle of the next lower step, followed carefully by the injured leg.
- Put your weight on the crutch handles.
- Step down with the good leg.



Please remember:

In this pamphlet, the shaded leg is the operated or injured leg.

Non-weight bearing

Walking

- Do not put any weight on your injured leg.
- Put one crutch under each arm.
- Grip the crutch handles firmly.
- Hold your injured leg off the ground.
- Take your weight through your hands by squeezing the crutches to your side.
- Bring the crutches and injured leg forward together.
- Lean forward taking your entire weight through your hands. Do not put weight on the top of the crutches.
- Hop forward with your good leg.

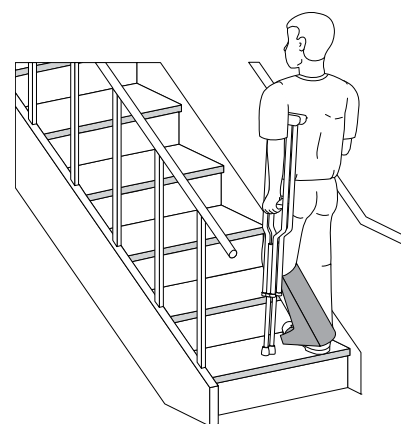
Using stairs, curbs and steps



Non-weight bearing – going UP with a handrail

Going up – the good leg steps up first. Then the crutches and the injured leg follow together.

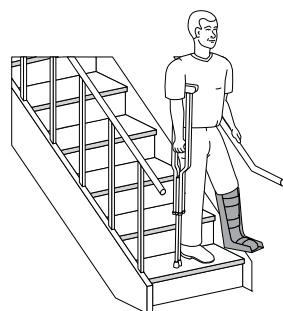
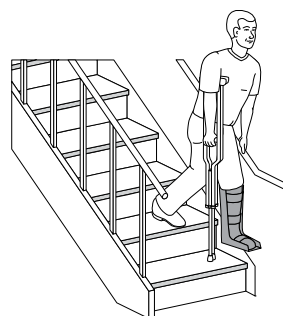
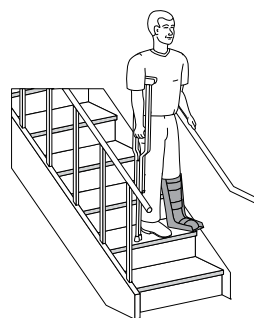
- Face the step with both crutches under the arm away from the handrail.
- Stand close to the step.
- Put your other hand on the handrail.
- Put your weight on the handrail and the crutches.
- Hold your injured leg up and slightly behind you.
- Hop up with your good leg.
- Bring the crutches and the injured leg up together.
- Keep the injured leg slightly bent.



Non-weight bearing – going DOWN with a handrail

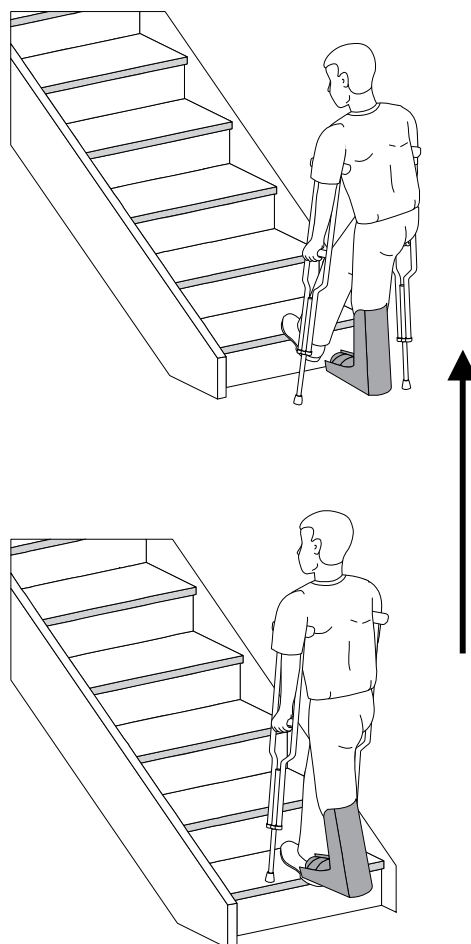
Going down – the crutches and the injured leg down first. Then the good leg follows.

- Face the step with both crutches under the arm away from the handrail.
- Stand close to the edge.
- Put your hand on the handrail.
- Put crutches in the middle of the next lower step.
- Keep the injured leg slightly bent in front of you. Do not place it on the step.
- Hop down with your good leg.



Non-weight bearing – going UP without a handrail

- Face the step with one crutch under each arm.
- Stand close to the step.
- Put your weight on the crutch handles. Keep injured leg slightly bent.
- Hop up with the good leg.
- Straighten your good leg and bring the crutches and injured leg up together.



Non-weight bearing – going **DOWN** without a handrail

- Face the step with one crutch under each arm.
- Stand close to the step.
- Put crutches in the middle of the next lower step.
- Keep the injured leg slightly bent and in front of you. Do not place it on the step.
- Put your weight on the crutch handles.
- Hop down with the good leg.

