

Crutch Use Home Instruction Sheet

Derick M. Johnson, DO
Carl H. Wierks, MD
Adam Baier, PA-C
Orthopedic Surgery

You have been prescribed crutches or a walker to use to allow your injury or surgical site to heal. You have been asked by your medical provider to limit the amount of weight bearing on your affected extremity to:

- Non-weight bearing (You do not allow any weight to be placed on the ground)
- Partial weight bearing (You only put ____% of your weight on the affected extremity)
- Weight bearing as tolerated (You put as much weight on the ground as you can tolerate with out pain)

1) **Crutch Fitting: (See figure 1)** Stand up straight with good posture. Place the crutch tips approximately 6 inches out from the side of your little toe. The top of each crutch should rest two finger breadths below your armpit. The handholds should be adjusted so your elbows are bent 20-30°. You should support all the weight when walking through your wrists and hands, not your armpits. Bearing weight through your armpits can injure the nerves going to your arms.

2) **Transfers: (See figure 2)**

Standing Up:

- Scoot out to the edge of chair. Hold both crutches by the handholds in the hand opposite the side of your involved lower extremity.
- Lean forward and push up with your free hand using the armrest of the chair if possible. Also push up with the hand holding onto the crutches.
- Once you safely are standing with good balance, place one crutch under each arm.

Sitting down:

- Back slowly up to the edge of the chair. Hold both crutches by the handholds in the hand opposite the side of your involved lower extremity.
- Keeping the involved leg forward, reach back to the armrest of the chair with your free hand and slowly lower yourself down to a sitting position.

3) **Crutch Walking (See figures 3 and 4)**

When using the crutches you will begin by always moving the crutches and the involved limb together. First advance the crutches and your involved leg, and then step forward with your uninvolved leg placing the required amount of weight through the handholds of each crutch. Repeat this sequence.

4) **Stairs (See figures 5 and 6)**

When ascending or descending stairs for the first time it is important to have someone spot you by placing one hand on your belt or waist to assist you if needed.

Going Up Stairs:

- Face the stairs and place the crutches close to the first step.
- Push down with your crutches and step up on the first step with your uninvolved leg.
- Bring your involved leg and both crutches up to the first step together.
- Repeat this sequence.

Going Down Stairs

- Face the stairs and place the toes of your good foot near the edge of the steps.
- Hold your involved leg out in front and lower both crutches and involved leg onto the first step.
- Putting weight through the crutches, step down to the first step with your uninvolved leg.



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If you have any questions about crutch fitting and crutch use, you should consult a physical therapist.

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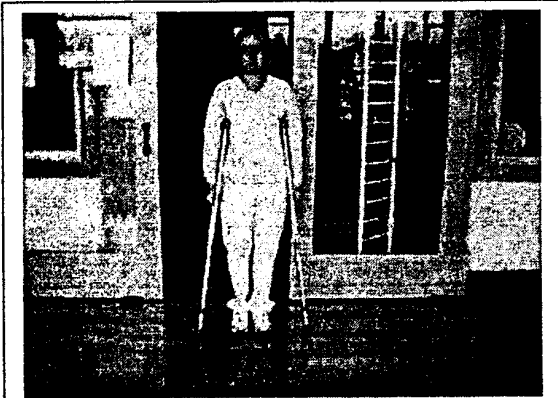


Figure 1. Correct Crutch Alignment



Figure 2. Sitting/Standing from chair with crutches



Figure 3. Walking with crutches showing involved lower extremity advancing with crutches

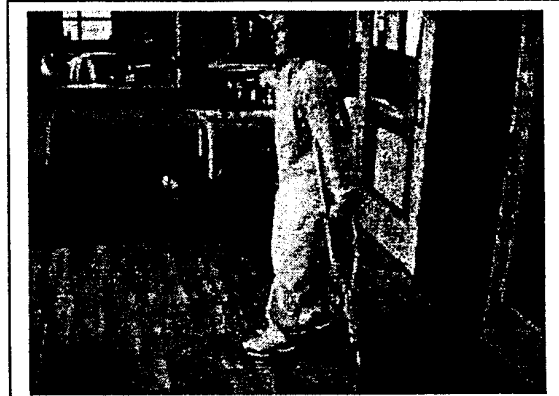


Figure 4. Walking with crutches showing stepping through with good leg

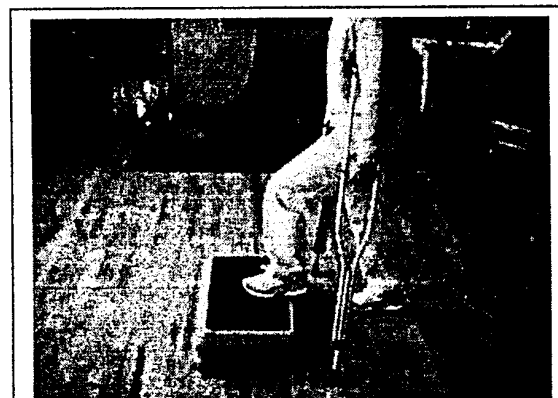


Figure 5. Stepping up a step with uninvolved leg



Figure 6. Stepping down a step with crutches and involved lower extremity