



CRUTCHES

CAUTION

This sheet contains general recommendations and does not constitute a professional assessment.

Why use crutches?

Crutches are useful to reduce weight on one leg, during an injury, for example.

Who are they for?

In order to use crutches, you must have good arm strength. It is often recommended that older people use a walker instead of crutches.

Precautions

Follow your health care professional's instructions regarding the amount of weight allowed on your injured leg.

Wear properly fitted shoes with flat, non-slip soles and good support.

When you adjust the crutches, ensure that the push buttons are fully engaged and the screws are properly tightened.

To avoid serious injury, put weight on your hands, not on your armpits, when using crutches.

How to adjust your crutches

- Wear your usual shoes.
- Place the tips of the crutches on the ground, approximately 15 cm (6 in.) in front of your feet and at a lateral distance of 15 cm (6 in.) from your feet.
- Adjust the height of the crutches so that they are approximately two finger widths below your armpits.

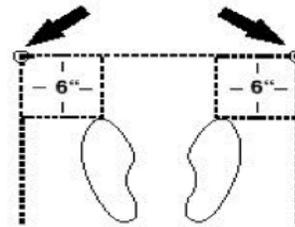
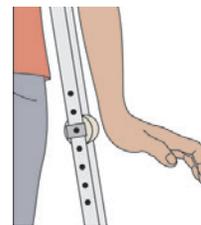


Image taken from: <http://www.croixrouge.ca>

- Adjust the handles (hand grips) to the height of your wrist.

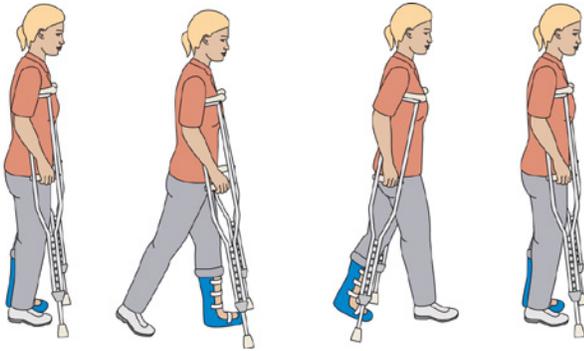


How to use your crutches

Walking while putting a small amount of weight on the injured leg

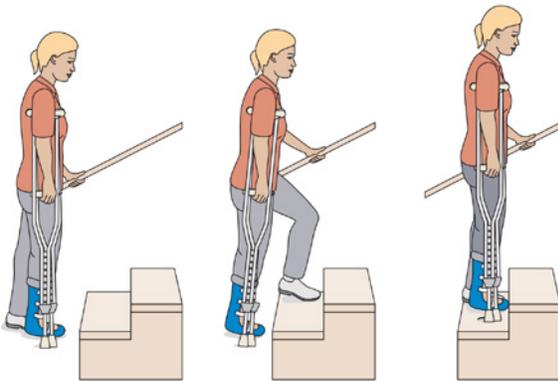
- Place the crutches approximately one foot in front of you.
- Place your injured leg in line with the tip of the crutches.
- Lean on the handles and keep the top of the crutches close to your body.
- Take a step forward, putting your weight on your non-injured leg.

- Support yourself on your non-injured leg to bring the crutches approximately one foot in front of you again.



Going up the stairs

- Hold the handrail (railing) with one hand and both crutches in the other hand.
- Firmly support yourself on the handrail and the crutches, putting your un-injured leg on the next step.
- Lift the crutches and the injured leg onto the same step.



Going down the stairs

- Hold the handrail (railing) with one hand and both crutches in the other hand.
- Place your injured leg and your crutches down one step.
- Firmly support yourself on the handrail and the crutches, bringing the un-injured leg down onto the same step.

Getting up from or sitting down on a chair

- Use the chair's armrests to get up.
- Place the crutches under your armpits only once you are fully in an upright standing position.

For your safety, you will also need to adopt the following habits:

- Replace the rubber tips as soon as they are worn out.
- Wear boot grippers for increased safety during winter.

Programs to help you pay for your equipment

There are many programs that can help finance technical aids. Note that a medical prescription is usually required.

- Check whether your private insurance covers technical aids.
- You may be eligible for funding if you are a social assistance, CSST or SAAQ recipient. Check with your case worker.
- Equipment receipts can usually be included in the medical expenses section of your provincial and federal income tax returns. A medical prescription is required.

FOR PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

Consult a physiotherapy professional to have your abilities evaluated, for personalized advice about walking accessories or instructions on how to use them.

Be sure to talk to your physician about any difficulties that you are having during your daily activities!