

Use of elbow crutches for non-weight bearing

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please telephone the PALS desk on 01271 314090.

You have been given crutches to help you move around without putting weight on or through your affected leg. This is some guidance to remind you how to use and look after your crutches. Before leaving hospital, your crutches will have been adjusted to the correct height. Your forearms should sit within the cuff and the handgrips point forward.

To sit:

1. Make sure you are close to the chair so you can feel it on the backs of your legs
2. Get your balance on your good leg so your injured leg is off the floor
3. Take the crutches off your arms
4. Hold both the crutches in one hand by the handgrips
5. Feel for the arm of the chair with the other hand
6. Lower yourself into the chair

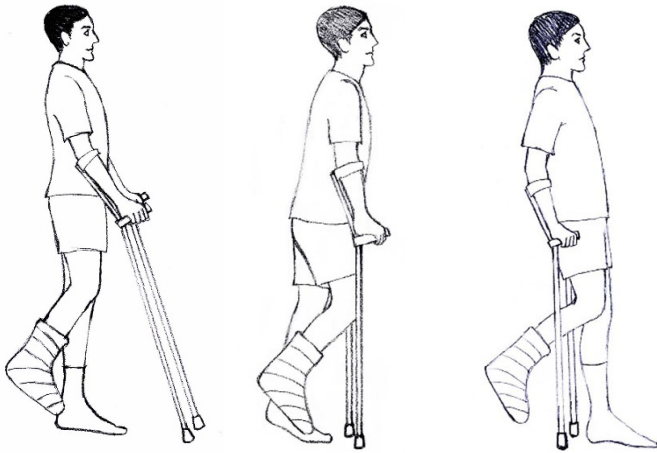
To stand:

1. Hold crutches in one hand by the handgrips
2. Push up on the arm of the chair with the other hand to stand onto your good leg
3. Stand up and slip your arms through the arm cuffs

Always remove your arms from the cuffs before sitting down or standing up to avoid injury to your shoulder or elbow.

Walking:

1. Keep your elbows into your sides
2. Place crutches forwards shoulder width apart
3. Lean on the crutches so they are used to take the weight off the injured leg
4. Step through with the good leg
5. When you have your balance, repeat stages 1- 4

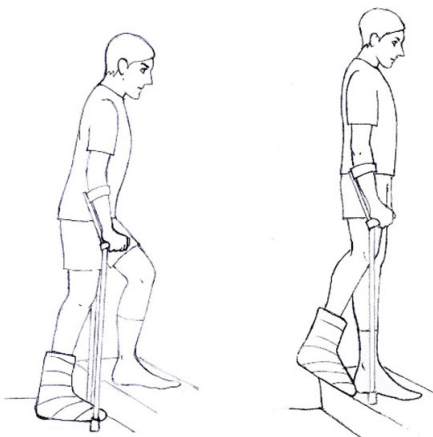


Stairs:

If you feel unsafe or unsteady, go up and down on your bottom.

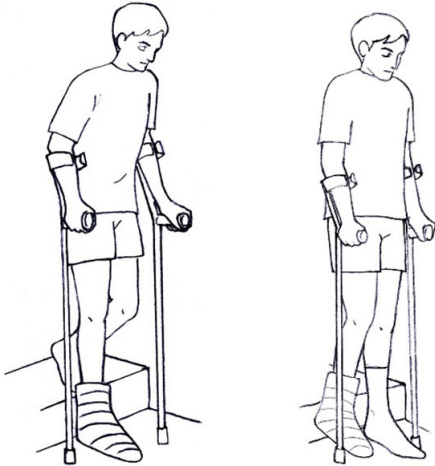
Going up stairs:

1. Keep the injured leg off the floor and **behind** you
2. Step up one step with your good leg
3. Move your crutches onto the same step and repeat as required

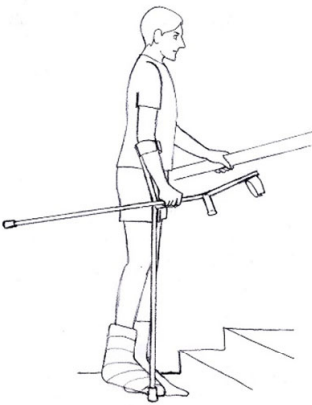


Going down stairs:

1. Keep the injured leg off the floor and in **front** of you
2. Move your crutches down one step
3. Move your good leg onto the same step



Stairs with a handrail: It is advisable to use a handrail if available. Stand close to the handrail and hold onto it with one hand. Hold both crutches in the other hand so that one is still used to help take your weight with your forearm in the cuff. Turn the spare crutch to a horizontal position and hold in the centre



General safety:

Remove any obstacles such as loose rugs or cables. Wear a flat shoe on the good leg and avoid wet floors. Watch out for uneven surfaces, and inadequate lighting.

Maintenance:

Check regularly that the rubber ends are not worn or clogged with dirt or stones, or that the tubes have any areas of damage. If you have a problem with your crutches return them to the department that issued them to you.

When you no longer need your crutches, please return them to the department of issue promptly.

Exercises:

To prevent foot swelling when you are not up and about, sit with your leg elevated so that your foot is higher than your hip.

Support your knee to prevent strain.

To improve circulation, curl and stretch your toes for 5 minutes every hour.

If your leg is not in a plaster you may have been given more active exercises to promote the healing of your injury. Do these exercises as instructed.

References

North Devon District Hospital Minor Injury Unit information sheet

www.castaways.org.uk

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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