



**GUIDELINES FOR CRUTCH WALKING**

1. For the first few days, you should have the assistance or supervision of a friend or family member for safety.
2. For non-weight bearing: Involved leg should mimic normal walking except it should not touch the ground. Mimicking normal walking is necessary to maintain normal balance and good range of motion of the other involved joints. Involved leg should always be in alignment with the crutches. Use the non-involved leg for balance. For weight bearing: Involved leg and crutch leg should line up evenly as you step, moving foot as normal as possible. For partial weight bearing: Involved leg should touch ground bearing only partial weight and pressure for balance.
3. Pressure (weight) goes on the hands and not in the armpits. When standing the arm rest should be 1 to 1-1/2 inch below underarm.
4. Keep your elbows into your sides to help stabilize the crutches under your arms.
5. Don't walk with your crutches in too close to your feet - you may trip on them. Your crutches should be placed 6-8" out to the sides of your feet.
6. Do not sit down with your crutches still under your arms. Rather, take them out and place both of them on your involved side, holding onto the hand grips while your other arm/hand takes hold of the arm rest or edge of the chair to sit down.
7. When in the process of sitting down, make sure the back of your legs touches the chair before sitting or you may fall. It is easier to get in and out of chairs with armrests. You also need to hold your involved leg out in front of you when sitting to avoid putting weight on it.
8. When you are going to stand, keep crutches together on the stronger side as you would when sitting. Slide as far forward in the chair as possible with your stronger (uninvolved) leg bent back further. Lean forward as you push with your arms and uninvolved leg to stand.
9. An easy way to remember proper stair climbing is by the phrase, "*up with the good and down with the bad*". When on stairs, you may use either the crutches or railing.

**Ascending:** Lead with your good leg going up stairs. Keep involved leg behind. Step up with the strong (uninvolved) foot, then bring up crutches along with involved foot.

**Descending:** Lead with your involved leg going down the stairs. Bring the crutches with the involved leg down first, then step down with the stronger (uninvolved) leg.

10. When walking on carpet, you must remember to pick up your crutches and involved leg more than on vinyl floors to avoid tripping. Also, remove throw rugs from floors for safety.
11. You may find it easier to ride in the back seat of the car.

