

# Using Your Crutches

## Fitting Crutches

- Place crutches in front and to side of each foot.
- Crutch armrests should rest on ribs with space for two fingers between armrest and axilla.
- When hand is on hand grip, elbows should be slightly flexed (30°).



## Walking on Level Surfaces

With one crutch under each arm and hands on handgrips, use your upper arms to hold the top of the crutches against your body, avoiding undue pressure under the arm. Push down on your hands to support yourself. To take a step, place both crutches out in front of you approximately 6 to 10 inches and far enough apart so you can comfortably fit between the crutches. Then move your injured leg up to the crutches, placing as much weight on it as instructed by your doctor. Using your arms, support yourself on the crutches and take a step with your uninjured leg just ahead of your injured leg. Then repeat the sequence: crutches, injured leg, uninjured leg . . .

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**DO** remove all throw rugs at home.

**DO** clean off tips after coming inside from snow or rain.

**DO** check the wingnuts on the crutches frequently for tightness.

**DON'T** lean on tops of crutches. Weight goes on hand pieces and uninjured foot.

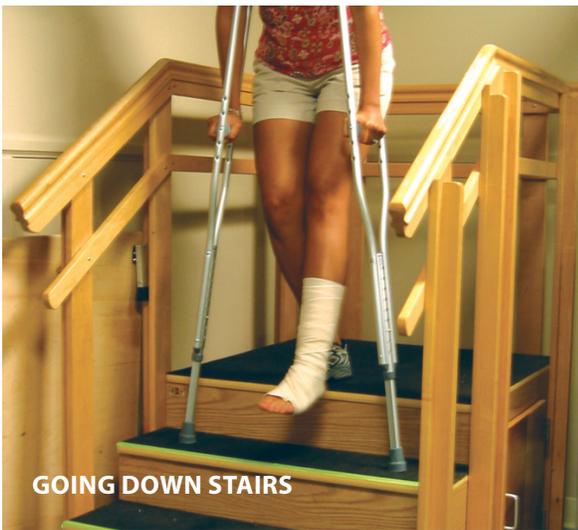
**DON'T** run on crutches.

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## Going Up Stairs

1. Start close to the bottom step and push down through your hands.
2. Step up to the first step, remembering that the uninjured foot goes up first.
3. Next, step up to the same step with the other foot, making sure to keep the crutches with your injured limb.
4. Check your balance before you proceed to the next step.
5. Have someone there to help if you need it.



## Going Down Stairs

1. Start at the edge of the steps, keeping your hips beneath you.
2. Slowly bring the crutches with your injured limb down to the next step (the injured foot goes down first).
3. Be sure to bend at the hips and knees to prevent leaning too far forward, which could cause you to fall.
4. Check your balance before you continue.
5. A handrail will make things easier for you. Simply hold both crutches on one side.
6. Have help handy.

## Sitting Down in a Chair

1. Back up to the chair until you feel the chair on your legs.
2. Put both crutches in your hand on the injured side; reach back for the chair with your other hand.
3. Lower yourself slowly into the chair, bending at your hips.

## Getting Up From a Chair

1. Hold both crutches on your injured side.
2. Slide to the edge of the chair.
3. Push down on the arm of the chair on the uninjured side.
4. Stand up and check your balance.
5. Put crutches under your arms and press into ribs.

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