



Department of Physical Therapy

Using Your Crutches

General Safety Tips

- Have someone nearby to help you until you feel confident using your crutches.
- Avoid crowds.
- Never carry anything when using crutches.
- Keep crutches slightly forward and to the side of your toes when standing and walking. Having a wide base of support will help you keep your balance.
- Support your body weight by pressing down on the hand grips with your hands. Squeeze the crutch pad between your arms and your ribs when standing and walking.
- Never lean on your crutches. Doing so could damage the nerves and blood vessels under your arms.
- Clean the tips of your crutches daily to prevent dirt and dust buildup, which can cause crutches to slip. Make sure the screws are tight.
- Make sure your floors at home are clutter-free.
- Turn on the lights if you get up at night.
- Avoid walking on small rugs, which can move and make you slip.
- Do not let pets jump on you or get in your way when you are standing or walking.
- Continue to use your crutches and maintain the weight bearing as instructed, until your surgeon tells you otherwise.

How to Adjust Your Crutches

To use crutches safely and correctly, they must be adjusted to fit your height and arm length. Follow the steps below for a perfect fit.



- Stand with your crutches under your arms. The tips of the crutches should be 6 to 8 inches forward and to the side of your toes.
- The crutch pads should be 2 finger widths (about 1 ½ inches) below your armpit.
- The hand grips should be level with the bend in your wrist when your arms are at your sides. When you hold on to the hand grips, there should be a slight bend at your elbow.

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How to Stand Up

- Place both crutches on your affected side and grasp both hand grips.
- Place your other hand on the arm or seat of the chair.
- Lean forward (bending at the hips). Push up from the chair using the hand grips, the chair and your non-affected leg.
- Once standing, check your balance. Then, place the crutches under your arms.



How to Sit Down

- Back up toward the chair until your non-affected leg touches it.
- Check your balance. Then, move both crutches to your affected side by grasping both hand grips.
- Bend slightly at the hips, and then reach back for the arm or seat of the chair with your non-affected hand.
- Slowly lower yourself into the chair.



If you have any questions about this information, please call **(864) 797-1201**.