Using Crutches with Amputation

Using Your Crutches Safely

Be sure your crutches fit you:
- Adjust the crutches for your height. The top of the crutch should be 1 to 2 inches below your armpit.
- Your crutch tips should be 2 to 3 inches out to the side of your feet so you do not trip on your crutches.
- There should be a slight bend in your elbow when holding onto the crutches.
- Keep your elbows close to your sides to help keep the crutches against your chest.
- The pressure or weight goes on your hands and not on your armpits. Nerve damage can result if weight is placed on the armpits for a long period of time.

Other tips:
- Make sure the crutch tips, grips and pads are in place on the crutches before using them for safety.
- Clean the crutch tips to make sure that they are free of dirt and stones.
- When walking on carpet you must pick up your crutches more than when you walk on tile or linoleum floors. Put away all throw rugs on the floor to keep from falling.

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Learn more about your health care.
• Take your time and do not try to walk too fast.
• Keep your head up and look ahead. Do not look at your feet when walking.

**Weight Bearing**

Based on your injury or surgery, you may need to limit the weight you put on your leg and prosthesis. Follow the order from your doctor or therapist:

- **Non-Weight Bearing**

  Without your prosthesis, you will need to support your weight on your full leg and the crutches.

- **Touch Down Weight Bearing**

  Touch the ball of the foot of your prosthetic leg on the ground to help your balance, but do not put weight on it.
- **Partial Weight Bearing**
  Put 30 to 50% of your body weight on your prosthetic leg.

- **Weight Bearing as Tolerated**
  Put as much weight on your prosthetic leg as you can tolerate.

**Standing Up**
Put both crutches on your injured side. Lean forward and push off with your arm from the chair.

**Sitting Down**
Remove the crutches and place both of them together on your injured side. Hold onto the hand grips with one hand. Use your other hand to hold onto the arm rest or edge of the chair and slowly sit down.

**Stairs**
Do not attempt to climb stairs or curbs until you have complete confidence in using your crutches. For safety reasons, you can sit down and scoot up and down the steps on your bottom if needed.

If you have a rail, put both crutches under one arm and hold onto the rail for safety.
Going up stairs with or without a railing:

- Keep the crutches on the stair you are standing on.
- Support your weight between your crutches and the railing, or between the crutches if there is no railing.
- Bring your good leg up to the next step.
- Straighten your good leg and bring the crutches and your prosthetic leg up.

If you are not wearing your prosthesis, support your weight on the crutches and railing and step up onto the step. Straighten your leg and then bring your crutches up.

![Diagram](image1)

Going down stairs:

- Put the crutches on the lower step while putting your prosthetic foot forward.
- Support your weight between your crutches.
- Move your good foot to the lower step.

![Diagram](image2)
Getting Into a Car

- Have someone open the door and move the seat back as far as they can.
- Back up until you feel the edge of the seat. Grab the back rest with one hand and the hand grips of the crutches with the other.
- Tip your head to avoid bumping it. Sit down using your good leg to bear your weight. Put the heel of your good leg on the car frame and push back to move across the seat until your injured leg can be swung into the car.

Getting Out of a Car

- To get out of the car, turn on the seat and place your foot out onto the ground. Be careful not to bump your head.
- Place one hand on the seat or back of the seat and the other hand on the hand grips of the crutches.
- Stand up and support your weight on your leg and the crutches.

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.