

Using Crutches with Leg Amputation



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

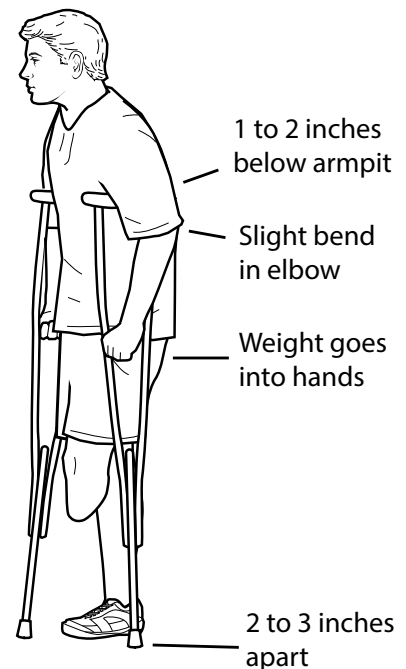
Using crutches safely

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.

Prevent Falls

- 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, pick up your crutches more than when you walk on tile or linoleum floors.
- Put away all throw rugs on the floor.
- 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.

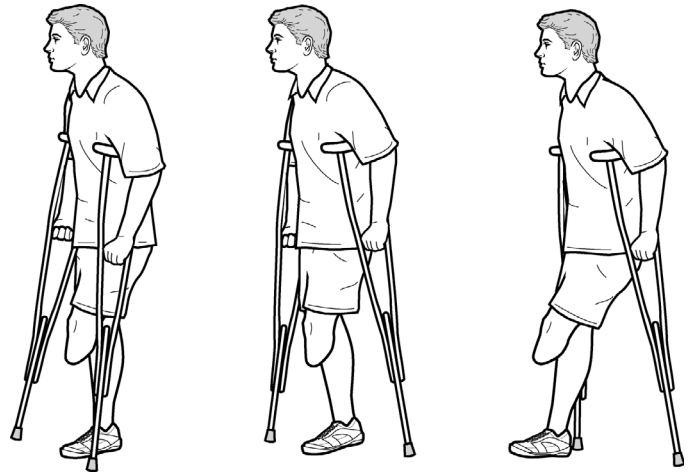


Weight bearing levels

You may need to limit the weight you put on your leg and prosthesis if you have one. Follow the order from your doctor or therapist. Your therapist will mark those that apply to you.

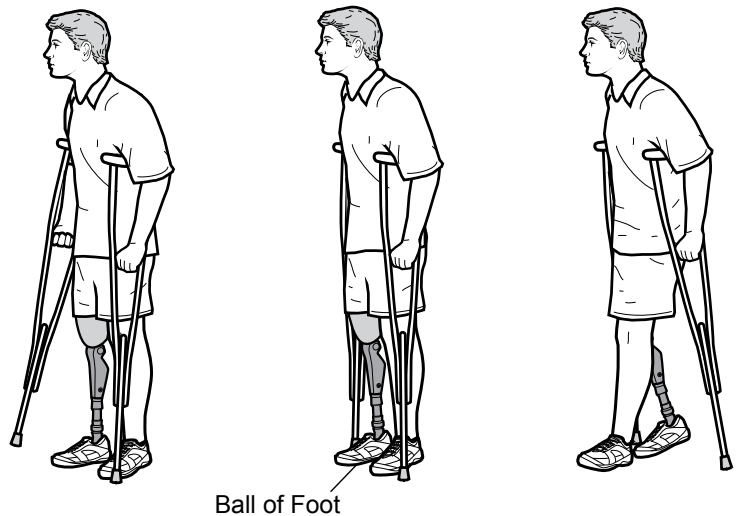
Non-Weight Bearing

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



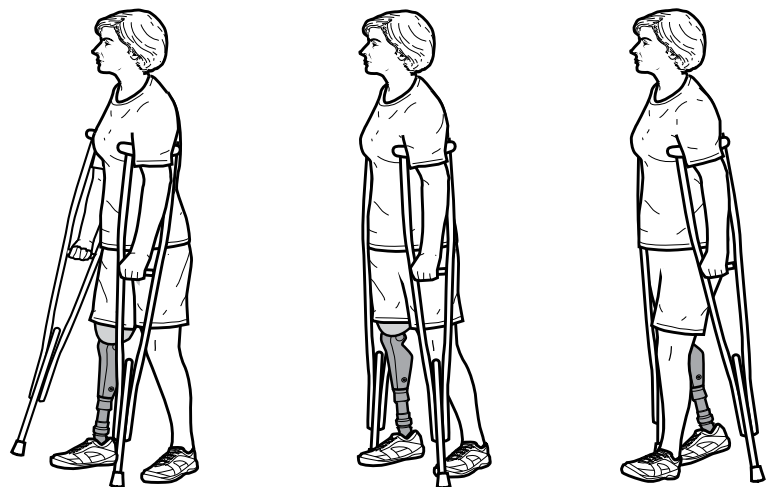
Touch Down Weight Bearing

Touch the ball of the foot of your prosthetic leg on the ground only 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.

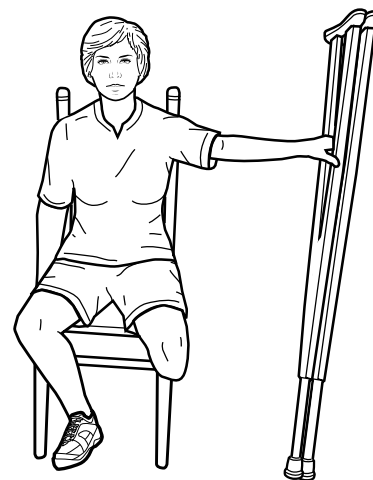


Weight Bearing as Tolerated

Put as much weight on your prosthetic leg as you can tolerate.

Standing up

- Put both crutches on the side of your residual limb.
- Lean forward and push off with your arm from the chair.
- Stand up putting your weight on your unaffected limb and crutches. Once standing, place your crutches under your arms.



Sitting down

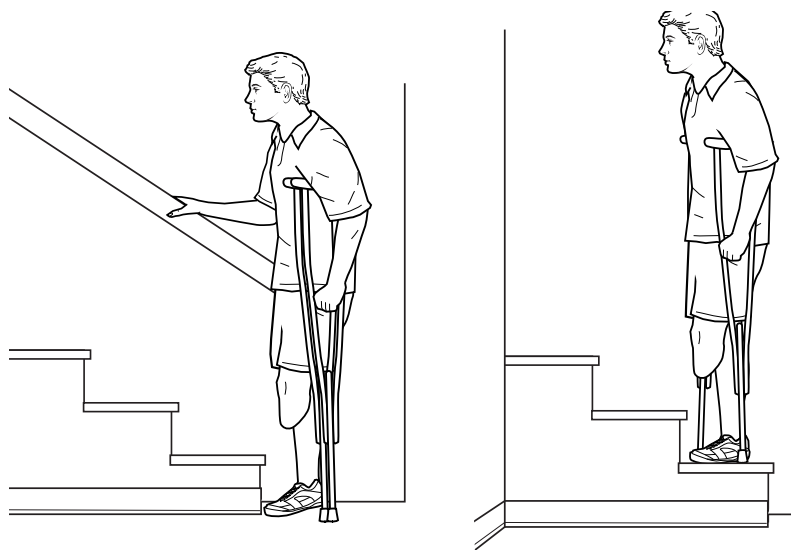
- Remove the crutches from under your arms and place both of them together on the side of your residual limb.
- Hold onto the crutches hand grips with one hand. Use your other hand to hold onto the arm rest or edge of the chair and slowly sit down.

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.
- Step up onto the step with your unaffected leg, straighten your leg, and then bring your crutches up.



If you are wearing a prosthesis:

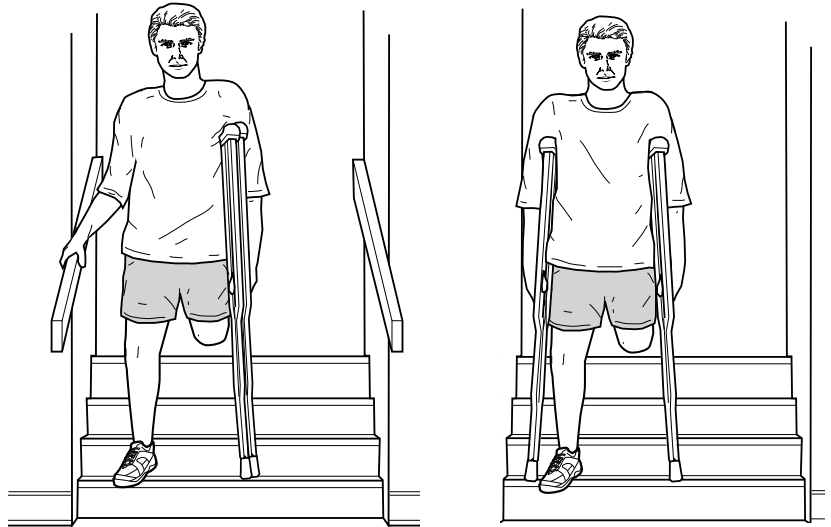
- Keep the crutches on the stair you are standing on.
- Support your weight between your crutches and the railing, or between the crutches if there is no railing.
- Bring your unaffected leg up to the next step. Straighten your unaffected leg and bring the crutches and your prosthetic leg up.

Going down stairs:

- Put the crutches on the lower step.
- Support your weight between your crutches and the railing or between crutches if there is no railing.
- Move your unaffected leg to the lower step.

If you are wearing a prosthesis:

- Put the crutches on the lower step while putting your prosthetic foot forward.
- Support your weight between your crutches and railing or between the crutches if there is no railing.
- Move your unaffected foot to the lower step.



Getting into and out of a car

Getting Into a Car

- Have someone open the door and move the seat back as far as possible.
- Back up to the car door 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 unaffected leg to bear your weight.
- Put the heel of your unaffected leg on the car frame and push back to move across the seat until your residual limb can be swung into the car.



Getting Out of a Car

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



Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.