

How To Use Crutches



Allina Health

**COURAGE KENNY
REHABILITATION
INSTITUTE™**

Weight-bearing Status

Weight-bearing status is the amount of weight you are allowed to put down on your injured leg.

Your weight bearing status is:

Non-weight bearing (NWB):

No weight is allowed on your injured foot.
Your foot must be off the floor entirely.

Toe touch weight bearing (TTWB):

You may rest your injured foot on the floor for balance only. Pretend there is an egg under the ball of your foot that you must not break.

Partial weight bearing (PWB):

You may put some weight, as directed by your doctor, on your injured leg.

Full weight bearing (FWB) or weight bearing as tolerated (WBAT):

You can put as much weight as you can tolerate on your injured leg.



Walking With Crutches

There are 6 different ways to walk with crutches.

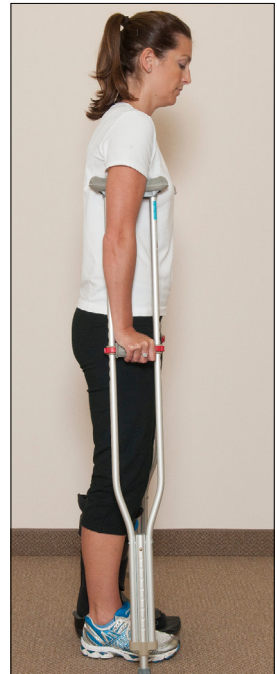
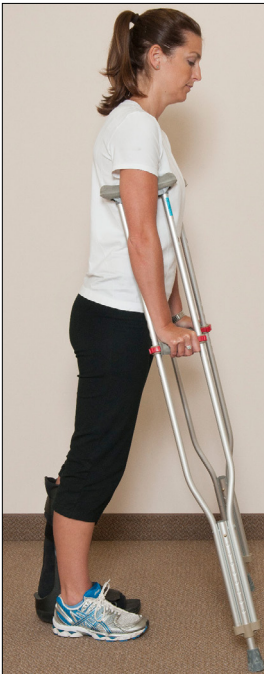
The person teaching you how to use crutches will let you know which way is right for you.

Walking With Crutches

Place the crutches under your arms and press them close to your body. **Always put (bear) weight through your arms — never on your armpits.**

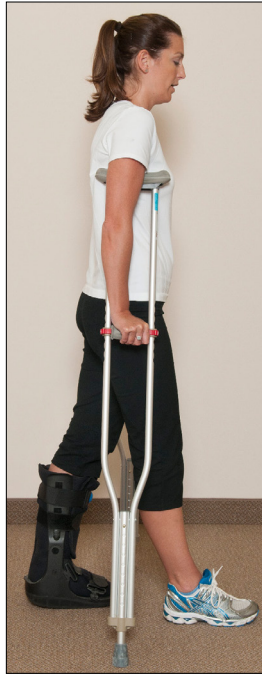
☐ Method No. 1 (step-to gait)

1. Bring the crutches forward.
2. Put your injured leg even with the crutches.
3. Step with your noninjured leg until your feet are even with the crutches.



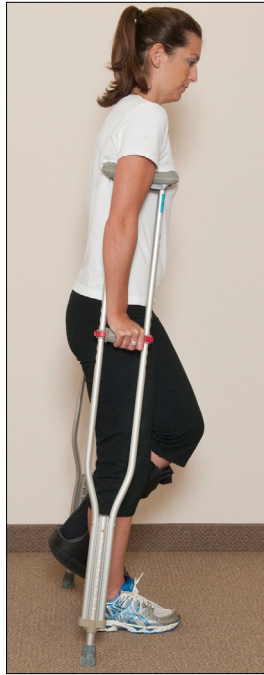
❑ Method No. 2 (step-through gait)

1. Bring the crutches and your injured leg forward at the same time.
2. Step past your crutches and injured leg with your noninjured leg.



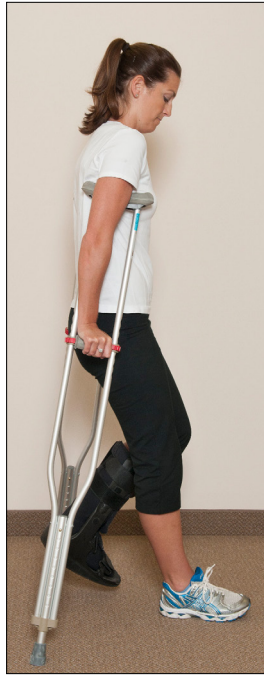
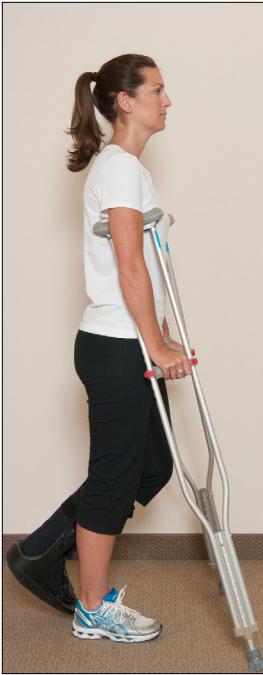
❑ Method No. 3 (non-weight bearing, swing-to)

1. If you cannot bear weight on your injured leg, hold it up and lift your weight with your arms.
2. “Swing” forward until your noninjured leg is even with your crutches.



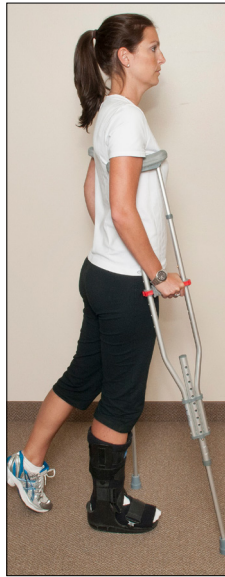
❑ Method No. 4 (non-weight bearing, swing-through gait)

1. If you cannot bear weight on your injured leg, hold it up and lift your weight with your arms.
2. “Swing” through until your noninjured leg is past your crutches.



❑ Method No. 5 (four-point gait)

1. Move your right crutch forward.
2. Move your left foot forward so it is even with your right crutch.
3. Move your left crutch forward.
4. Move your right foot forward so it is even with your right crutch.



❑ Method No. 6 (two-point gait)

1. Move your right crutch and your left foot forward together.
2. Move your left crutch and your right foot forward together.





Walking Up Stairs

There are different ways to walk up the stairs depending on your weight-bearing status and whether or not the stairs have railings.

The person teaching you how to use crutches will let you know which way is right for you.

❑ Walking Up Stairs (Weight Bearing as Tolerated With a Railing)

Always use a railing when you can. Hold both crutches in one hand and the railing in the other. If possible, the crutches should be on the side of your injured leg.

1. Start with your feet close to the base of the first step.
2. Step up with the non-injured leg first, then the injured leg and the crutches.
3. Check your balance before going to the next step.

Remember: If you're going up stairs, lead with your good leg.



❑ Walking Up Stairs (Weight Bearing as Tolerated Without a Railing)

If there is not a railing, you can use crutches under your arms.

1. Start with your feet close to the base of the first step.
2. Step up with the non-injured leg first, then the injured leg and the crutches.
3. Check your balance before going to the next step.

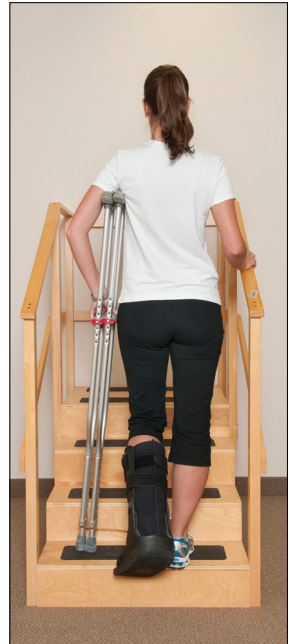
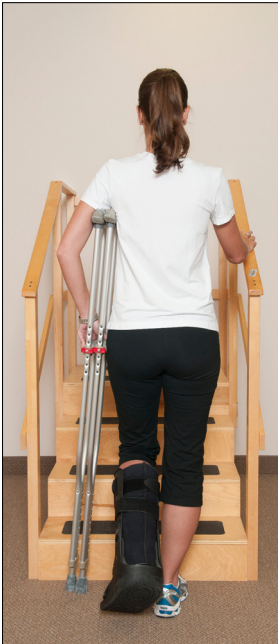
Remember: If you're going up stairs, lead with your good leg.



❑ Walking Up Stairs (Non-Weight Bearing With a Railing)

If your stairs have a railing and you cannot put weight on your leg. Hold both crutches in one hand and the railing in the other. If possible, the crutches should be on the side of your injured leg.

1. Start with your feet close to the base of the first step.
2. Step up with the non-injured leg first, then bring the crutches to the same step.
3. Check your balance before going to the next step.



❑ Walking Up Stairs (Non-weight Bearing Without a Railing)

If you do not have railings and you can't bear weight through your injured leg, use your crutches under your arms.

1. Start with your feet close to the base of the first step.
2. Step up with your noninjured leg first. Keep the crutches on the stair below you.
3. Once you have your balance, bring the crutches up to the stair you are standing on.
4. Check your balance before going to the next step.





Walking Down Stairs

There are different ways to walk down the stairs depending on your weight-bearing status and whether or not the stairs have railings.

The person teaching you how to use crutches will let you know which way is right for you.

❑ Walking Down Stairs (Weight Bearing as Tolerated if You Have a Railing)

1. Stand at the edge of the first step.
2. Bend at the hips and knees and move the crutches and injured leg down to the next step.
3. Then follow with your uninjured leg to the same step.
4. Check your balance before the next step.

**Remember: If you're going down stairs,
lead with your injured leg.**



❑ Walking Down Stairs (Non-weight Bearing With a Railing)

If you have railings and you can't bear weight through your injured leg, use your crutches under your arms.

1. Stand at the edge of the first step.
2. Bend at the hips and knees and move the crutches and injured leg down to the next step without putting weight through your injured leg.
3. Follow with your noninjured leg to the same step.
4. Check your balance before the next step.

Remember: If you're going down stairs, lead with your injured leg.



❑ Walking Down Stairs (Non-weight Bearing Without a Railing)

If you do not have railings and you can't bear weight through your injured leg, use your crutches under your arms.

1. Stand at the edge of the first step.
2. Bend at the hips and knees. Move the crutches and the injured leg down to the next step without putting weight through your injured leg.
3. Follow with your noninjured leg to the same step.
4. Check your balance before the next step.

Remember: If you're going down stairs, lead with your injured leg.



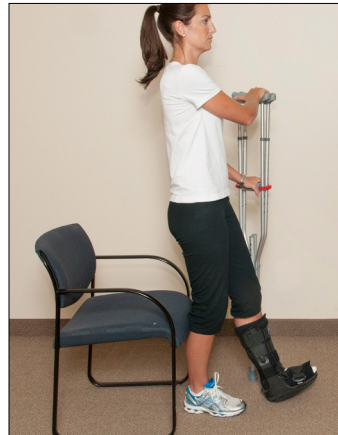


Sitting Down Getting Up Crutch Height Tips

The following information is for anyone who uses crutches, regardless of your weight-bearing status.

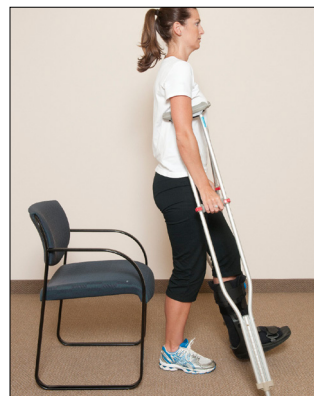
Sitting Down in a Chair or on a Bed

1. Back up to the chair or bed until you can feel it against the back of your legs.
2. If you can't put all of your weight on the injured leg, stretch it out in front of you.
3. If your left leg is injured, use your left hand to hold both crutches by the handgrips. Reach back for the chair or bed with your right hand. If your right leg is injured, hold the crutches with your right hand and reach with your left hand.
4. Bend at the hips and lower yourself slowly.



Getting Up From a Chair or Bed

1. Scoot to the edge of the chair or bed.
2. If your left foot or leg is injured, use your left hand to hold both crutches by the handgrips. If your right foot or leg is injured, use your right hand to hold both crutches by the handgrips.
3. Push up with your hands on the arm rest or on the bed.
4. Stand up and check your balance. Place the crutches under your arms and press them close to your body.



Crutch Height

Proper crutch height is very important for safe walking.

■ To find your crutch height:

1. Stand up straight.
2. Place the crutch tips six inches forward and six inches to the outside of your feet.
3. You should be able to fit at least two finger-widths between the top of the crutch and your armpit.
4. With hands on grips there should be a slight bend in your elbows.

■ Adjust the crutch height by:

- pushing in the button and moving the crutch leg until it catches in the proper hole, **or**
- removing the nuts and bolts, moving the crutch leg to the proper height and replacing the nuts and bolts.

■ Set the handgrips by:

- pulling out the buttons on either side of the crutch and moving the handgrip to the proper hole and pushing the buttons back in, **or**
- removing the nut and bolt, moving the handgrip to the proper height and replacing the nut and bolt.

Tips

- Take small steps while walking on wet surfaces or ice to keep you from slipping or falling.
- Use a shorter stride on ramps.
- If another person is with you, they should always stand in front of you when going down steps and behind you when going up steps.
- Remove throw rugs to keep you from tripping.
- If crutch tips, handgrips or armpit cushions wear out, replacements are available at drug stores and physical therapy departments.
- If crutches are adjusted by nuts and bolts, check them at least once a week to make sure they are tight.
- You may buy “Ice Gripper” tips for winter months.
- When stopping to rest, never “hang” on the crutches by your armpits.



Notes



Notes







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