

Using Crutches

Getting the fit right

- **Underarm crutches:** the top pad should sit **two to three finger-widths BELOW your armpit** — never pressing into it. The handgrip should be at wrist-crease level with the elbow slightly bent.
- **Elbow crutches:** the handgrip at wrist-crease level, with the arm cuff about 5 cm below the elbow.

YOUR WEIGHT GOES THROUGH YOUR HANDS, NOT YOUR ARMPITS

Leaning on the underarm pads presses on the nerves there and can cause weakness and numbness of the hand that takes weeks to recover. Grip the handles and push down through your palms. The pads are only there to steady the crutch against your chest wall.

Walking on the flat

1. Move **both crutches forward** about one step's length.
2. Move the **operated leg** forward to the crutches, putting down only the weight you have been allowed.
3. Push down through your hands and **step through with the good leg.**

STAIRS — REMEMBER THIS SIMPLE RULE

Going UP: the GOOD leg goes first.

Coming DOWN: the BAD leg and the crutches go first.

"Up with the good, down with the bad."

Use the handrail whenever there is one — hold the rail with one hand and both crutches in the other. Take one step at a time and never hurry. If you are unsure, go up and down sitting on your bottom, one step at a time.

SAFETY

Check the rubber tips regularly and replace them when worn · take extra care on wet floors, polished tiles and bathroom floors · avoid loose mats and door thresholds · wear firm closed footwear · carry things in a rucksack, not in your hands · do not use crutches in the dark — keep a night light

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