

Using a Walking Stick

For balance and to unload a painful hip or knee

THE ONE THING ALMOST EVERYBODY GETS WRONG

Hold the stick in the hand OPPOSITE to your painful or operated leg.

If your right knee or hip is the problem, the stick goes in your **left** hand. This feels wrong at first, but it is correct — it lets the stick take the load at the same moment the painful leg is on the ground, and it reproduces normal walking, where the opposite arm swings forward with each leg. Holding the stick on the same side makes you lean over the bad leg and increases the load on it.

Setting the height

Stand upright in your usual shoes with the arm hanging loose. **The top of the handle should reach the crease of your wrist.** Your elbow will then be bent about 15 to 20 degrees when you hold it.

A stick that is too long pushes your shoulder up and hurts your neck. Too short and you stoop.

Walking

1. Move the **stick and the painful leg forward together**, at the same time.
2. Take weight through the stick and the painful leg.
3. Step through with the good leg.

STAIRS

Up with the good leg first, then the bad leg and the stick together.

Down with the stick and the bad leg first, then the good leg.

Use the handrail with your free hand.

CHOOSING AND CHECKING

A **quadripod** (four-footed) stick gives more stability if your balance is poor, but it is slower and needs level ground.

Replace the **rubber tip** as soon as the tread wears smooth — a worn tip on a wet tile is a fall waiting to happen.

Using a stick is not a sign of weakness. It is what keeps you walking, independent and out of hospital.

Search: walking stick, cane, which hand to hold stick, quadripod

