

## Physiotherapy Department (Rugby St Cross)

# Using elbow crutches

You have been given crutches to help you move around. This information reinforces the advice from your physiotherapist on how to use them

### Standing

- Place the crutches into the 'H' position;
- Place one hand onto both of the handles and the other on the arm of the chair if there is one and stand up;
- Once standing place each hand through the cuffs of the crutches and hold the handle (handles facing forward);
- For stability in standing, the crutches should be slightly in front and out to the side of you.

### Sitting

- Take each arm out of the crutches;
- Place them in the 'H' position and hold with one hand;
- Once you feel balanced reach back for the arm of the chair with your free hand. In a slow and controlled manner, lower yourself into the chair.

### Walking

#### For Non-weight bearing:

- Keeping the affected leg off the ground and taking the weight through the unaffected leg, place the crutches one step ahead and level with each other;
- Move forwards between the crutches swinging the unaffected leg and just in front of the crutches.

#### For Partial-weight bearing:

- Taking some weight through the affected leg place the crutches one step ahead and level with each other;
- Place the affected leg on the ground just before the crutches;
- Step through with the unaffected leg.



# Patient Information

## On the Stairs

- Where possible use a handrail and hold both crutches in the same hand (use one crutch to support you and hold the other held on the outside of that crutch) or give the spare crutch to someone else.
- Step up by following this sequence:
  - Unaffected leg
  - Affected leg
  - Crutch
- Step down by following this sequence
  - Crutch
  - Affected leg
  - Unaffected leg

## Care and Maintenance of your Crutches

Regularly check that the:

- Rubber tips are not worn to the point where no tread is showing;
- Crutches are a matching pair; do not use a mismatched pair;
- Crutches are tight and are not cracked;
- Springclip tips are located into both holes fixing the height adjustment and they are freely adjustable;
- Tubing is not cracked or damaged;
- Holes on the adjustment legs are round and not worn and oval.

For Trough/Gutter crutches:

- Check that the handgrip angle adjustment is tight and the trough attachment bolts are tight;
- Always use the crutches as advised by the issuer;
- Once set up there should be no reason to adjust the crutches without consultation with the issuer;
- Check the height of your crutches – when standing upright with the crutches in your hand your elbows should be slightly bent or when standing with your hands at your sides the crutch handle should come up just above the wrist joint.
- **Always use the crutches as advised by the issuer.**
- **Avoid wet floors and uneven surfaces, and remove obstacles such as loose rugs before using crutches.**
- **Do not store crutches in subzero temperatures.**
- **Use the crutches in good light and wear supportive footwear.**
- **A mild detergent and warm water can be used to clean metal crutches.**

## Patient Information

**Regularly inspect equipment for signs of wear. Please contact the issuer of the crutches if you find any signs of wear.**

**These crutches are on loan, please return to:**

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