

Physiotherapy

Non-weight bearing (NWB) mobility

As a result of your leg fracture and/or surgery, your orthopaedic consultant has advised that you do not put any weight onto this leg. This is referred to as non-weight bearing (NWB).

This period of NWB is needed to provide time for proper bone and tissue healing. It also allows for any metalwork that was used during surgery to remain in the correct position.

Good tissue/bone healing is improved by avoiding any undue stress. Excessive smoking can also interfere with the healing process – therefore, it is a good reason to stop or cut down smoking.

Before leaving the hospital, your walking aid will be adjusted to the correct height.

NWB (using a frame)

Maintain your balance on the good leg and place the frame at a comfortable distance in front of you, make sure all the four feet of the frame are firmly on the floor.

Pushing down through your arms, hop into the middle of the frame. Make sure you are well balanced, and distribute the weight between your arms, the frame, and your good leg, before you take the next step.



Patient Information

If you have a frame with two wheels at the front you can push the frame forward rather than picking it up.

NWB using elbow crutches

Your elbow crutches will be adjusted to the correct height, your forearms should sit within the cuff and hand grips point forward.

To stand

- Hold the crutches in one hand by the grips
- Push up on the arm of the chair with the other hand and stand on your good leg.
- Slip your arms through the arm cuffs.

To sit

- Make sure you are close to the chair so you can feel it at the back of your legs
- Get your balance on your good leg so your injured leg is off the floor
- Take your crutches off your arms
- Hold your crutches by the arm grips or lean them against the chair
- Reach back for the arms of the chair and lower yourself into the chair

Never stand or sit with your arms in the crutches.

Walking NWB with elbow crutches

- Keep your elbows into your sides
- Place the crutches forwards shoulder width apart to ensure your whole body can fit through the gap
- Lean on the crutches to take weight onto your arms and the crutches
- Step through with your good leg
- When you have your balance, repeat the above steps.

Patient Information

Stairs

If you feel unsafe or unsteady, go up and down on your bottom.

Ascending:

- Keep your injured leg off the floor and behind you by bending your knee
- Push down on the crutches and step up with your good leg
- Move your crutches up onto the same step

Descending:

- Keep the injured leg off the step and out in front of you
- Maintain your balance on your good leg and place the crutches on the step below
- Lower yourself down to the step leaning through the crutches

Stairs with handrail:

It is advisable to use a handrail if available. Hold on to the handrail with one hand and hold both the crutches in the other hand to help you weight bear on the one crutch. Ensure you keep the horizontal crutch on the outside of the supporting crutch. Alternatively, arrange for a family member to carry it up for you where possible.

Exercises

To prevent your foot swelling when you are not walking, sit with your leg elevated so that your foot is higher than your hip.

To improve circulation, curl and stretch your toes for 5 minutes every hour.

If your leg is not in a plaster, you may have been given more active exercises to promote the healing of your injury. Do these exercise as instructed by your therapist.

Patient Information

General safety

Remove any obstacles such as loose rugs or cables. Wear trainers or flat shoes on your good leg and avoid wet floors.

Watch out for uneven surfaces and inadequate lighting.

Maintenance

Check regularly that the rubber ends of the crutches are not worn or clogged with dirt or stones.

If you have a problem with the crutches, return them to the department that issued them to you.

When you no longer need your crutches, please return them to the department of issue as promptly as you can.

For further information contact:

UHCW Orthopaedic wards, Physiotherapy on 024 7696 5106

Rugby Orthopaedic Physiotherapy on 01788 663054

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