

Physiotherapy

Using elbow crutches

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

Standing

1. Place the crutches into the 'H' position.
2. Place one hand onto both handles. Place your other hand on the arm of the chair if there is one and stand up.
3. Once standing, place each hand through the cuffs of the crutches and hold the handle. The handles should be facing forward.
4. To be stable when standing, the crutches should be slightly in front and out to the side of you.

Sitting

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



Walking

For non-weight bearing

1. Keep your affected leg off the ground. Put your weight through your unaffected leg.
2. Place the crutches one step ahead of you. The crutches should be level with each other.
3. Move forwards between the crutches. Swing your unaffected leg so it lands just in front of the crutches.

For partial-weight bearing

1. Taking some weight through the affected leg, place the crutches one step ahead of you. The crutches should be level with each other.
2. Place the affected leg on the ground just before the crutches.
3. Step through with the unaffected leg.

On the stairs

Where possible, use a handrail.

Hold both crutches in the same hand. Use one crutch to support you and hold the other on the outside of that crutch. Or give the spare crutch to someone else.

Step up by following this sequence:

1. Unaffected leg
2. Affected leg
3. Crutch

Step down by following this sequence:

1. Crutch
2. Affected leg
3. Unaffected leg

Using the crutches

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

- 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.
- To clean metal crutches, use a mild detergent and warm water.

Care and maintenance of your crutches

Regularly check that:

- the rubber tips are not worn to the point where no tread is showing
- the crutches are a matching pair - do not use a mismatched pair
- the crutches are tight and not cracked
- the spring clip tips are located into both holes fixing the height adjustment – check the tips are freely adjustable
- the tubing is not cracked or damaged
- the 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 consulting the issuer.
- Check the height of your crutches.

When standing upright with the crutches in your hand, your elbows should be slightly bent.

When standing with your hands at your sides, the crutch handle should come up just above your wrist joint.

Patient Information

These crutches are on loan. Please return the crutches to:

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