

Ambulatory Aids

Crutches

Measurement:

- 1) The top of the crutches should be at least two finger widths deep from the armpit. Make sure the shoulders are relaxed.
- 2) When the arm is hanging straight down, the hand piece should be at the level of the wrist.
- 3) Hold the top part of the crutch firmly between the chest and the inside of the upper arm. Do not allow the top of the crutch to push up into the armpit. It is possible to damage nerves and blood vessels with constant pressure. Support the weight with the hands on the hand rests. The hand rests should be padded.
- 4) When standing still, it will be safer to stand with the crutches slightly ahead and apart. Remember, do not let the top of the crutches push up into the armpit; stand straight.

Walking (Non-Weight Bearing):

- 1) Put the crutches forward about one step's length. Hold the injured (bad) leg up from the floor.
- 2) Push down on the crutches with the hands and squeeze the top of the crutches between the chest and arm.
- 3) Swing the uninjured (good) leg forward. Be careful not to go too far.
- 4) Now step on the 'good' leg.

Walking (Partial Weight Bearing – 2 Crutches):

- 1) Put the crutches forward about one step's length.
- 2) Put the 'bad' leg forward, level with the crutch tips.
- 3) Take most of the weight off of the 'bad' leg by pushing down on the handgrips and squeezing the top of the crutches between the chest and arm.
- 4) Take a step with the "good" leg.
- 5) Make steps of equal length.

Walking (Partial Weight Bearing – 1 Crutch):

- 1) Place the crutch under the arm opposite the injured leg.
- 2) Step with the crutch and injured leg
- 3) Then step with the uninjured leg.

Stairs:

- 1) Use one crutch and the stair rail, if present (It doesn't matter which side the stair rail is on.) Only use the railing if it is stable and there is someone to carry the other crutch. Use two crutches if there is no stair rail.
- 2) If both crutches can be held in one hand safely, you can use both crutches on one side and the railing on the other.

Up-Stairs:

- 1) Walk close to the first stair and hold onto the stair rail.
- 2) Hold onto the rail with one hand and the crutch with the other hand.
- 3) Push down on the stair rail and the crutch and step up with the 'good' leg.
- 4) If non weight-bearing, hop up with the 'good' leg.
- 5) Bring the 'bad' leg and the crutches up beside the 'good' leg.
- 6) Remember: The 'good' leg goes up first and the crutches move with the 'bad' leg.

Down-Stairs:

- 1) Walk to the edge of the stairs in the same way.
- 2) Place the 'bad' leg and the crutches down on the step below; support weight by leaning on the crutches and the stair rail.
- 3) Bring the 'good' leg down.
- 4) Remember: The 'bad' leg goes down first and the crutches move with the 'bad' leg.
- 5) Use the same rules when going up and down curbs or doorsteps.

Canes:

Measurement:

- 1) When the arm is hanging straight down, the hand piece should be at the level of the wrist.
- 2) Support the weight with the hands on the hand rests. The hand rests should be padded.

Walking:

- 1) Hold the cane in the hand on your unaffected (good) side so it provides support to the opposite lower limb.
- 2) Advance the cane simultaneously with the opposite affected (bad) lower limb.
- 3) Lean your weight through the arm holding the cane as needed.
- 4) Always step with the 'good' leg first.

Walkers:

Measurement:

- 1) When the arm is hanging straight down, the hand piece should be at the level of the wrist.
- 2) Support the weight with the hands on the hand rests. The hand rests should be padded.

Walking:

- 1) Stand in the middle of the walker.
- 2) Grasp the walker grips with your hands. Then move the walker forward at an arm's length that feels comfortable. The back legs of the walker should be even with your toes.
- 3) Step forward with your injured (bad) leg into the middle of the walker. Continue to grasp the walker grips with your hands.
- 4) Step forward with your uninjured (good) leg. As you do so, try not to put your full weight down on your 'bad' leg by supporting some of your weight with your arms.

Tips:

- 1) Do not take a step until all four legs of the walker are on the ground.
- 2) Do not place the walker too far ahead of you. Keep the walker's back legs even with your toes.
- 3) If your doctor says you can use a wheeled walker, you should only use two wheels on the front portion of your walker. The only time it is acceptable to use four wheels is when the walker has breaks.

DME

General Guidelines:

- 1) Once DME is dispensed to you, it is a non-returnable item (due to OSHA law).
- 2) If there is ever a defect in the brace, please contact the office right away. If it is a manufacturer's defect, we can exchange the brace for you.
- 3) Always hand-wash the DME when needed and air-dry.
- 4) If the brace becomes worn out, too big, or too small, please contact the office. Depending on when you received the item and your insurance protocol, the doctor may be able to prescribe you a new brace, which we'll submit to your insurance for you.