



Information for patients, relatives and carers

Use of Crutches

Crutches are designed to:

- Assist with balance
- Take pressure off the legs
- Improve confidence when walking

Using Crutches

Standing Up

Place the crutches into the 'H' position. Then place one hand onto both handles and stand up, using the other hand to help you push up from the chair.

Once standing, place each hand through the cuffs of the crutches and hold the hands (handles face forward). For stability in standing, each crutch should be slightly in front and out to the side of your feet.

Sitting Down

Have the chair immediately behind you. Take each arm out of the crutches and place them into 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 a sitting position.

Walking

For non-weight bearing (no weight to be put weight on your injured leg):

Keeping the affected leg off the ground and taking weight through the unaffected leg, place the crutches one step ahead, level with each other.

Move forward between the crutches, swinging the unaffected leg to land just in front of the crutches.

For partial weight bearing (some weight can be put on your injured leg):

Taking some weight through the affected leg, place the crutches one step ahead, level with each other.

Place the affected leg on the ground, just before the crutches. Step through with the unaffected leg.

On stairs

Where possible use the handrail and hold both crutches in the same hand or give the spare crutch to someone else.

Going up:

1. Unaffected leg
2. Affected leg
3. Crutch

Going down:

1. Crutch
2. Affected leg
3. 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
- Spring clip tips are located into both holes
- Tubing is not cracked or damaged
- Adjustment mechanism adjusts freely
- The holes on the adjustment legs are round and not worn to an oval shape
- Regularly inspect equipment for wear.

Should any of the above be evident on your crutches, please contact the department that supplied them.

In Addition:

- Avoid wet floors and uneven surfaces and remove obstacles such as loose rugs before using crutches
- Do not store in sub-zero temperatures
- Use the crutches in good light and wearing supportive footwear
- A mild detergent and warm water can be used for cleaning metal crutches

For trough/gutter crutches

Check that the handgrip angle adjustment is tight, and the trough attachment bolts are right.

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.

To check the correct height of your crutches

- When standing upright holding the hand grips, your elbow should be slightly bent.
- When standing upright with your hands by your side the crutch hand grips should reach just above the wrist joint.

① If you have further concerns about your condition, please contact your GP. If you are not sure what to do, call 111 or get help from 111 online: <https://111.nhs.uk/> [When to use NHS 111 - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email pals@york.nhs.uk

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you require this information in a different language or format, for example Braille, large print, Easy Read or audio, please ask the staff who are looking after you.

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