Connecticut Orthopaedics

Megan R. Wolf, MD

Sports Medicine/Foot & Ankle

Crutch and Cane Training
Instructions

In order to let your injured foot, ankle, knee, or leg heal, please follow these directions:

CRUTCHES

- Crutches will be measured to fit you based on your height.
- Crutches should fit so that when you stand straight, there are at least 2 fingerbreadths of space between the top of the crutch and your armpit.
- Crutches should never be "leaned on" so that there is pressure on your armpit. There are nerves that run under the arms and pressure on these nerves may cause damage. (Numbness in the hand or arm is a sign of this.)
- The crutch handgrips are adjustable and should be adjusted so that your hands carry your weight when your arms are extended. Your weight should all be on y our hands/palm, and NEVER on your armpits.
- When walking with crutches put the crutches out in front of you first; then, carrying your weight on the crutches, swing your good foot and your body forward. Do not advance the crutches more than a normal step ahead of you.
- For going up stairs: Using your crutches, put your good foot up one step, then bring your crutches and body up to the same step. You may want to hop up stairs using both crutches in one hand and a handrail in the other hand for support. For going down stairs: Using your crutches, put the crutches down first, then advance your good foot and body. Again, you may want to hop down the stairs using the crutches and a handrail for support.
- **CAUTION**: When crutch tips get wet, or when you are walking on wet floors, the crutch tips get slippery. Great care must be taken order to keep crutches from sliding out from under you.

CANES

- A properly fitted cane should rest on the ground with your hand on it and your elbow slightly bent when you are standing up straight.
- A cane should normally be carried in the opposite hand from your injured leg (i.e., if you hurt your left foot, your cane should be in your right hand).
- Normally, you will step forward with your injured leg and swing the cane forward at the same time. Then, bearing your weight partly on the cane and partly on your injured leg, you will swing the good leg through and take another normal step with it.

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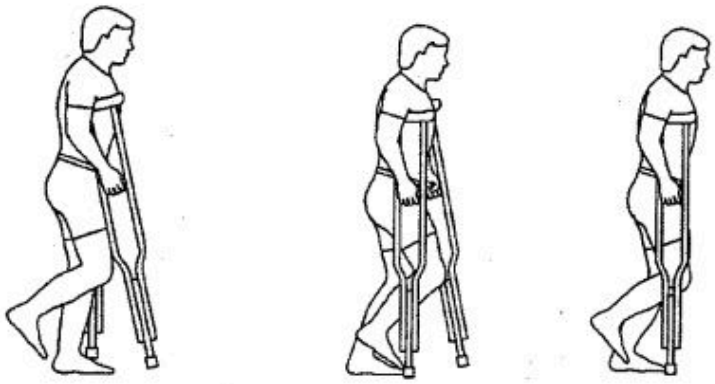
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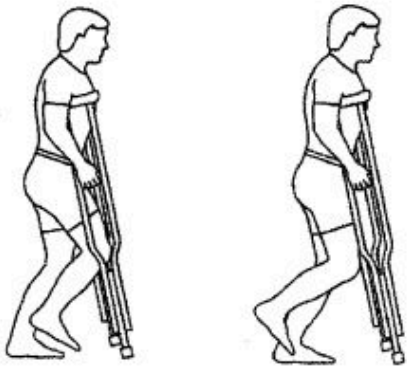
3 point gait with crutches:

Place weight on uninvolved leg. Move both crutches forward. Move the involved leg up to the crutches. Move the uninvolved leg up to the crutches. The involved leg may be at any status from non-weight bearing to full weight bearing. Check with your therapist or physician for your weight bearing status. As you become comfortable with this gait pattern, you may be able to advance to stepping through with the uninvolved leg.



2 point gait with crutches:

Advance one crutch forward and opposite foot forward. Place weight on the advanced foot and crutch. Advance other crutch and foot forward, placing weight on that crutch and foot. Continue to repeat pattern.



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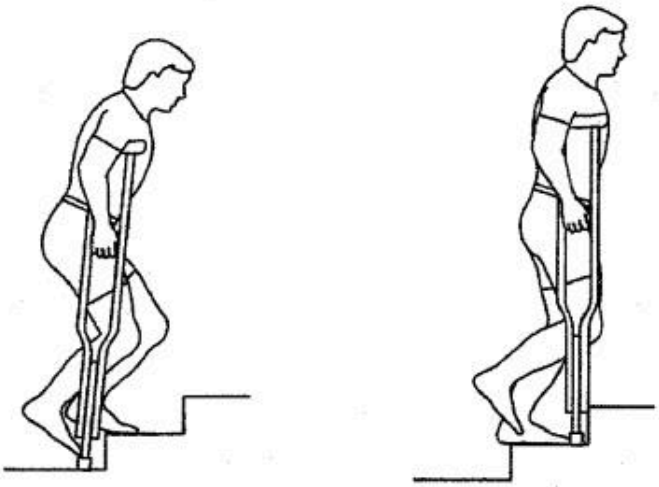
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Crutches for Stairs

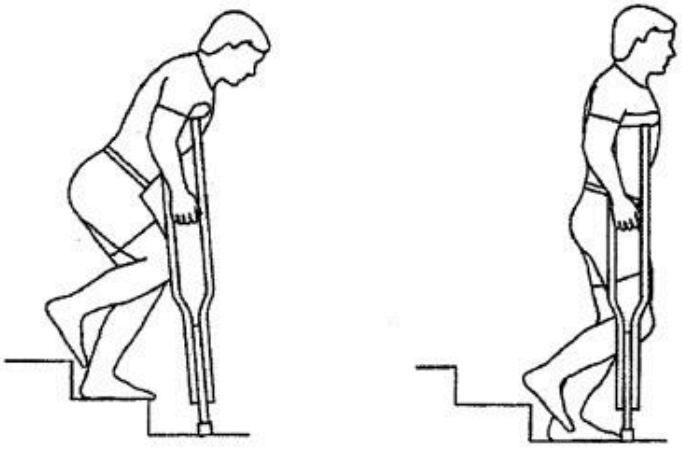
Climbing stairs with 2 crutches:

Approach to first stair. Place weight on crutches. Place uninvolved leg or strong leg on step. Step up. Bring crutches and involved leg up to same step. Repeat sequence.



Descending stairs with 2 crutches:

Approach to first stair. Place weight on uninvolved leg. Lower crutches and step down leading with involved leg. Bring uninvolved leg down. Repeat sequence.



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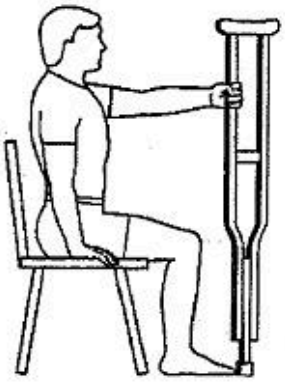
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Crutch Use For Gait

Fit the crutch while standing. The tips or bottom of the crutches should be about 5-6 inches to the side of the feet. Crutches should be adjusted so that there is space between the armpit and top of crutch. This space should be about two or three fingers width. The handgrip should be adjusted so that the elbow is bent to about 20-30 degrees. Do not rest your weight on the tops of the crutches. The arms should be supporting your weight.

Sit to stand: Place both crutches together. Hold in the hand of the uninvolved side as shown.



Place weight on uninvolved leg. Use other hand to help push up while also pushing down on the crutches to attain standing position. When you are balanced in standing, transfer one crutch to the involved side. To move from stand to sit, reverse these steps, reaching back toward chair with hand of uninvolved leg to help lower to a sitting position.





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These exercises are to be issued by a trained professional.