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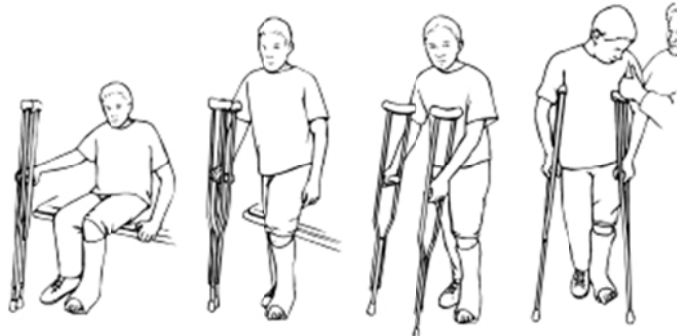
**Crutch Walking Guidelines**

***HOW TO USE YOUR CRUTCHES***

- Fitting the crutches. The top of the crutch should be 3 finger widths below the armpit. (See Fig 1)



- Carry your weight on your hands. Your armpits should not rest on top of the crutches.
- Standing with your crutches from sitting: Put both of your crutches on your good side.
  1. Place one hand on the handgrips of the crutches. Your other hand should be placed on the seat or arm of the chair.
  2. Push up to stand.
  3. Place your crutches below each arm so that you carry your weight on your hands. You are now ready to walk.



### Walking with your crutches

Specific techniques should be determined by a physical therapist. Your therapist will tell you the type of gait you will use to walk.

- **4-Point gait:**

1. Move your right crutch forward, and then move your left foot forward.
2. Move your left crutch forward, and then move your right foot forward.
3. Repeat steps 1 & 2.

- **Partial weight bearing/3-point gait:**

1. Move both crutches forward at the same time.
2. Push down on both crutches and then step with weight through bad leg up to the crutches.
3. Step with your good leg past the crutches.
4. Repeat steps 1, 2, & 3.

- **Toe-Touch weight bearing:**

1. Move crutches forward at the same time.
2. Push down on both crutches with full weight through hands.
3. Move bad leg forward. The toe on the bad leg should touch the ground between the crutches for balance only.
4. Hop forward with your good leg. Use the toes of the bad leg only if needed for balance.

- **Non-weight bearing:**

1. Move both crutches forward at the same time.

2. Push down on the crutches and then hop forward on your good leg. Keep your bad leg off the floor as you hop forward.
3. Repeat steps 1, 2, & 3.

### **Going upstairs and downstairs using crutches**

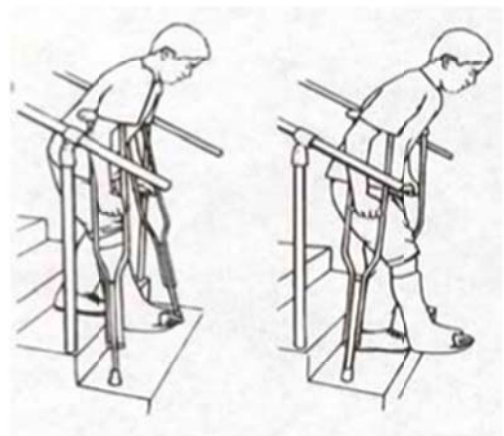
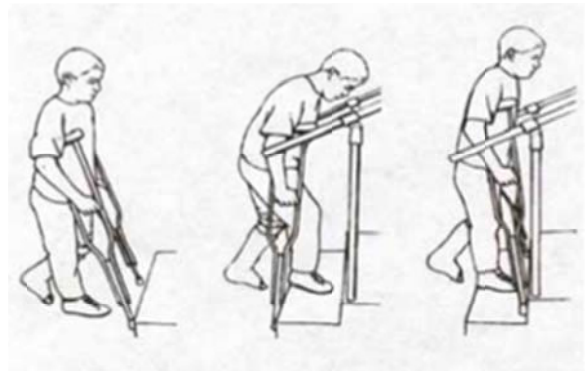
Always take one step at a time. If the stairs have a railing, you may hold onto the rail with one hand and use the crutches under your opposite arm.

For going upstairs:

1. Step up with the good foot
2. Step up with the bad foot
3. Bring the crutches up

For going downstairs:

1. Place the crutches on the step down
2. Step down with the bad foot
3. Step down with the good foot



**Photos courtesy of VHI**

## **Going upstairs and downstairs without using crutches**

Use these when the stairs are unsafe or if you are afraid to use your crutches.

- To go upstairs: Sit on the stairs and bend your good leg. Put your hands on the next step higher. Push with your hands and good leg to lift your bottom up to the next step.
- To go downstairs: Sit on the stairs. Put your good foot on the next step down. Keep your hands on the same step as your bottom. Push with your hands and good leg and slide your bottom down to the next step.

## **Safety Tips**

- Watch out for slippery floors, water puddles, ice, snow and other slippery places.
- Throw rugs are unsafe because they easily catch on the tips of your crutches.
- Be careful when walking in gravel and grass.
- Wear a good tie shoe with a flat sole or tennis shoes when using crutches.
- Tighten the screws on the side of your crutches and check the push pins on the bottom every day.

***ALERT:*** Call your child's therapist, doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this

information. This teaching sheet is meant to provide you with additional information about your child's care. Diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up should be provided by your health care professional.