

How to use crutches

Introduction

This leaflet gives you instructions about the safe use of crutches.

Please read the information in this leaflet carefully as it is important that you use your crutches safely and correctly to avoid any delay in your recovery. When you are issued with crutches, the hospital staff will adjust them for your height. Using crutches at the wrong height can lead to back pain. If you keep the handles pointing forwards and your arms close to your sides you will be safer and use less energy when moving.

Getting started

To stand:

1. Hold both crutches in one hand.
2. Push up from the chair.
3. Once standing, transfer one crutch into the other hand.
4. Put the crutches in front of you and get your balance.



Figure 1: Pushing up from a chair

To sit:

1. Have the chair immediately behind you so you are able to feel the edge of the chair against the back of your knees.
2. Put both crutches in one hand.
3. Hold the chair arm with the other hand.
4. Sit down gently.

Reference No.

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Department

Emergency

Review due

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**Patient
Information**

Preparing to walk

If you have been advised NOT to stand on your injured leg:

1. Stand with the handles pointing forward and your arms by your side.
2. Put your crutches forward together.
3. Keep your injured leg off the ground and in front of you, with your knee slightly bent and your foot behind you.
4. Take your weight on your hands and through your arms.
5. Bring your good leg forward, just past the crutches, to help keep you balanced.
6. Repeat from step 2.

If you have been advised to stand on your injured leg:

1. Stand with the handles pointing forward and your arms by your side.
2. Put both crutches forward.
3. Put your injured leg one step forward taking some weight through your foot. The amount of weight you put through your foot will change as things improve and you have less pain. It is important to follow this advice to prevent long term ankle problem.
4. Take your weight onto your hands and step further through with your good leg.
5. Put both crutches forward and repeat from step 2.



Figure 2: Non weight bearing

Patient Information

Managing stairs

The safest way to go up and down stairs is to use your bottom, not your crutches. If you need to use your crutches and there is a suitable handrail you should hold this with one hand and your crutches in the other to take your weight.

- **Going up:** Good leg, bad leg, crutch.
- **Going down:** Crutch, bad leg, good leg.

Safety advice

- Wear flat supportive shoes.
- Use a chair with a high seat and arms to help you sit and stand up with ease.
- Remove obstacles in your home such as loose rugs.
- Avoid wet floors.
- Make sure that the area/room is well lit.
- Beware of hazards including doors/ uneven surfaces, wet leaves and ice.
- Regularly inspect your crutches for wear, bent or damaged tubes or loose rivets.
- Make sure that the pin adjustment holes, used to alter crutch length, are not worn.
- Check that the rubber ends are not worn or clogged with dirt or stones.

When you no longer need your crutches they **must** be returned to GIS Healthcare or you will be charged for them. GIS can be contacted to arrange collection; the contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

Further information

All X-rays are reviewed and you will be contacted if there are any concerns. However, if you feel your symptoms are not improving or your pain is increasing, you should contact NHS 111 for advice.

**Patient
Information**

Contact information

Orthopaedic Outpatients

Cheltenham General Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 3147

Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 4:00pm

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 6137

Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 4:00pm

GIS Healthcare

Sevenside Trading Estate

Sudmeadow Road

Hempsted

Gloucester

GL2 5HS

Tel: 01452 520438

Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm

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Making a choice

Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation

* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85