Using crutches

This fact sheet is for people who have presented to the emergency department and need crutches.

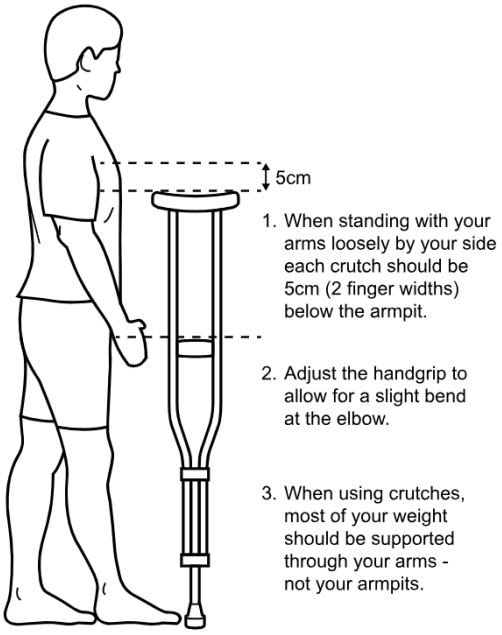
This fact sheet provides general information. If you have specific concerns, speak to your healthcare professional for further information and advice.

Why use crutches

You may need to use crutches because it is too painful to put weight on your foot or leg because of an injury. You may also need to keep the weight off that leg to help it to heal and to stop more damage.

How to fit crutches

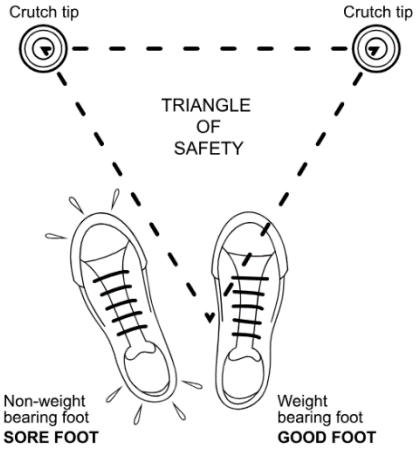
Crutches will usually be fitted by a healthcare professional in the emergency department to make sure they are the correct height and fit for you.

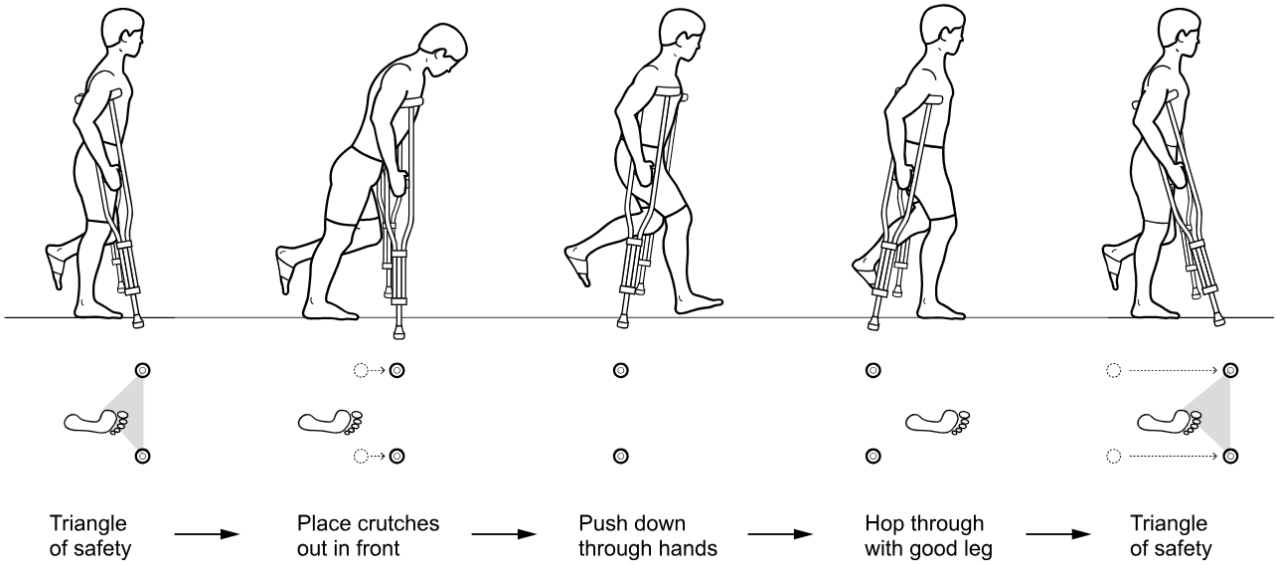


Safety tips

- Make sure there are no loose screws or wooden parts.
- Wear firm fitting enclosed non-slip shoes. Do not only wear socks.
- Beware of slippery and wet surfaces and be careful on stairs.
- Don’t leave the injured leg hanging down for any length of time as this can cause it to swell.
- Make sure any weight goes through your hands, not your armpits.
- To change direction, hop around. Do not twist your foot.

Walking with crutches





Going up stairs

- When going up stairs, support your weight on your hands and push up, putting your good foot up first.
- Supporting your weight on the good foot, keep your weight forward and bring your bad leg and crutches up next.

Going down stairs

- When going down stairs put your crutches down on the stair below and your bad leg out first. Do not put weight on your bad leg if you are not allowed to.
- Make sure you are balanced, then take the weight down through your crutches and step down with your good leg.

Sitting in a chair

- Back up to the chair until the back of your legs touch it.
- Hold both crutch handles on the side of the good leg.
- Reach back with your other arm and lower yourself into the chair.

Getting up from a chair

- Hold both crutches together by the handles on the side of your good leg.
- Push yourself up using the hand grips and the chair arms.
- Once you are standing and balanced, arrange the crutches under each arm.

What to expect

This depends on your injury and how quickly you recover. It is important to follow medical advice and to attend all follow-up appointments.

Your GP, physiotherapist or specialist should tell you what will happen next, at your next appointment. If you do not know what to do next, ask your GP.