

## Using axillary crutches: non-weight bearing

Non-weight bearing with crutches will prevent your injured leg from taking any weight at all.

### Fitting crutches

While fitting crutches, make sure the injured leg does not take any weight.

### Height of the crutches

1. While standing up straight, put one crutch underneath one armpit.
2. The height of the crutch needs to be adjusted so that the top measures 3 fingers width from the top of the crutch to the armpit.

### Height of handgrip

1. Only measure once the height of the crutches has been measured.
2. With one crutch resting under the axilla (armpit) and the same arm by the side, the hand grip should be adjusted so it is level with the wrist crease.
3. When holding the hand grips, the elbows should have a slight bend.

### Non-Weight Bearing (NWB) – use of crutches

1. Move both of your crutches forward a comfortable distance.
2. Push down through your hands and take all the weight through your arms.
3. Hop forward so that the uninjured foot lands in line with the crutches.
4. Repeat.
5. Once you become comfortable with the use of crutches, landing the uninjured foot past the line of the crutches helps with stability.

### General tips for walking with crutches

- Keep your injured leg off the ground at all times.
- No rushing – take your time.
- Ensure that you squeeze the crutches into your chest with the inside of your arms to keep them secure.
- Do not let the crutches lean into your armpits.

### Turning corners

- Turn by taking small hops forward around in a circle.
- Do not twist or pivot on your leg as this can lead to a loss of balance.



# Stairs

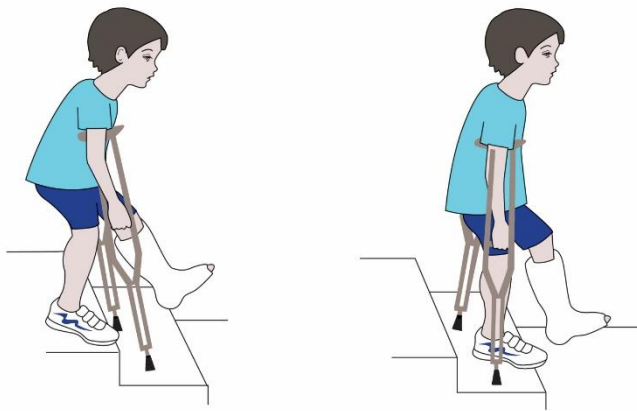
## Going up

1. Push down into your crutches.
2. Hop up onto the step with your uninjured leg.
3. Next bring your crutches and injured leg up and make sure you are balanced before continuing.
4. Repeat.



## Going down

1. Put your crutches down onto the step and hold your injured leg in the air above the lower step.
2. Push down into your crutches and lower yourself onto the step.
3. Make sure you are balanced before continuing.
4. Repeat.



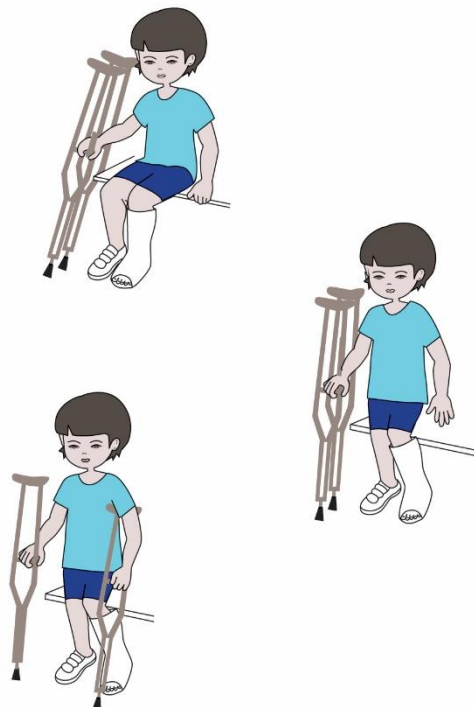
## General tips for walking up and down stairs with crutches

- No rushing – take your time.
- One step at a time.
- Do not attempt if you feel unsafe or if you are likely to fall.
- You could always sit on the stairs and go up or down on your bottom.
- Have someone help you carry your bag at school.
- At school it may be good to get out of class a few minutes early to beat the rush – speak to your teacher. Or, wait a few minutes before leaving.
- If you have to manage a flight of stairs and there is a rail to hold, you could give one crutch to someone and use the rail the same way as you would the crutch.



## Sitting and standing with crutches

1. Place your crutches together and hold on to both of the handgrips with the hand of the uninjured side.
2. You can then push through the handgrips to help you to sit or stand.
3. Your other hand is free to hold onto the chair for support and to help you with slowly standing or sitting.



## Safety

- Check the stoppers at the end of the crutches as well as the wing nuts to ensure they have not worn away or are loose.
- It is important that you do not lean on the crutches under your armpit when standing or walking, as they will put unnecessary pressure through important blood vessels and nerves.
- Slippery surfaces like wet floors, loose rugs and carpet, and uneven ground need to be either negotiated carefully or avoided.
- It is important that you wear safe footwear when using your crutches. Footwear should have good grip and not readily slip off your foot.

If you have any queries or concerns please see your local doctor or return to the Perth Children's Hospital Emergency Department.



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