Why do I need to 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 because further damage may occur if you don’t.

How to fit crutches?

1. When standing with your arms loosely by your side, each crutch should be 5cm (2 finger widths) below the armpit.
2. Adjust the handgrip to allow for a slight bend at the elbow.
3. When using crutches, most of your weight should be supported through your arms – not your armpits.

Using crutches safely

- Make sure there are no loose screws or wooden parts.
- Wear non-slip shoes (not only socks).
- Beware of slippery / wet surfaces and use caution on stairs.
- Don’t leave the affected limb hanging down for any period of time as it will get swollen.
- Make sure any weight goes through your hands, not your armpits.
- To change direction, hop around. Don’t twist the foot.

Walking with crutches

Triangle of safety

Place crutches out in front
Push down through hands
Hop through with good leg
Triangle of safety

Crutch Tips

Non-weight bearing Foot = Sore Foot
Weight bearing Foot = Good Foot
Using crutches

Going Upstairs.
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 bring your bad leg and crutches up next.

Getting Downstairs
When going down stairs put your crutches down on the stair below and 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.

Getting up from a Chair
• Hold both crutch handles on the side of the good leg.
• Reach back with your other arm and lower yourself into the chair.

How long should I use crutches for?
This depends on your injury and how quickly you recover. It is important to follow medical advice and to attend all follow-up appointments.

You should be told exactly what happens next with follow up, whether this is by your GP, Physiotherapist or Specialist. If you do not know what to do next, then ask your GP.

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.

Additional Instructions:

Seeking help:
In a medical emergency go to your nearest emergency department or call 000.

Disclaimer: This health information is for general education purposes only. Always consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure this information is right for you.