

# Learning how to use crutches

Crutches will provide you with the extra balance you require. When using crutches you will need to allow yourself more time than usual to get around, and to rest often. With practice, you should become steadier and begin to move about confidently.

## Safety tips

- Use rails where possible and chairs with armrests to make it easier.
- Always wear flat shoes with a firm grip on the sole.
- Use crutches on firm ground.
- Make sure the rubber tips of your crutches are not split or loose.
- Avoid wet and slippery surfaces.
- Remove rugs and clutter on floors.
- Be careful of electrical cords and wires.
- Put your weight on your arms and hands, not under your arms as this could damage the nerves in that area.
- Don't put weight on your affected leg without seeking advice from your doctor.

*Please call us or return to BNE if you have any concerns. Alternatively, your GP has received information regarding your visit to **BNE** and can address any concerns you may have.*

## How to use crutches

### Walking

1. Place both crutches a short distance in front of you (the distance of a natural step).
2. Keep the crutches about 10cms from the sides of your feet (when walking) and parallel to each other.
3. Keep your injured leg off the floor by bending the knee.
4. Step forward with your unaffected leg taking the weight through your hands.

### Getting INTO a chair or bed

1. Stand with your back to the chair or bed. The back of your unaffected leg should touch the chair or bed.
2. Place both crutches in the hand of the weaker leg, or put one aside.
3. Lower yourself gently using your arms for support.

### Getting OUT of a chair or bed

1. Place both crutches in the hand of the affected leg, or place one out of one way and leave the other beside you.
2. Move your unaffected leg back until the back of your calve touches the chair or the side of the bed.
3. Now push yourself up.
4. Move one crutch to the other side, or pick up the crutch next to you.

## Stairs

### Going UP

If there's no handrail, use both crutches and lead with the good leg. Stand close to the step and with your weight on the crutches, lift the uninjured foot up to the first step. Once your weight is on the good leg, bring the crutches up to the same leg.

Repeat the process on each step.

If there is a hand rail, use it. Hold both crutches in one hand, hold the handrail with the other, and with all your weight on your arms, bring the good leg up one step. Then bring the crutches up to that step and repeat for each step.

### Going DOWN

Going down stairs while on crutches requires a lot of practice and is the most challenging and dangerous areas in mastering the use of crutches. Be patient when learning.

1. Hold your injured foot out in front of you and hop down each stair on your good foot. Use the crutches or handrail as above.
2. Take one step at a time.
3. Ask someone to 'spot' you the first time you try this.
4. If this is too difficult, try sitting on the stairs and inch yourself down each step.

*Please come back to see us for your follow-up care and treatment.*

**627 Rode Road Chermside**

*Located between The Prince Charles and St Vincent's Private Hospital Northside.*

**[www.emergencyBNE.com.au](http://www.emergencyBNE.com.au)**