

Crutch and Cane Walking: Single Crutch or Cane

How to use your single crutch or cane

Fitting

- Crutch. The top of the crutch should be 3 fingers width below the armpit. (See Fig 1).
 - **Carry your weight on your hand.** Your armpit should **not** rest on top of the crutch.
- Cane. Stand straight with your arms hanging by your sides. The hand grip of the cane should be at the level of the bend in the wrist. There should be a slight bend in the elbow when using the cane.

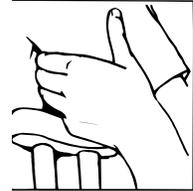


Fig 1

Standing from a sit: Put the crutch or cane on your good side.

1. Put one hand on the handgrip of the crutch or cane. Put your other hand on the seat or arm of the chair.
2. Push up to stand.
3. If using a crutch place it below arm so that you carry your weight on your hand. You are ready to walk.



Walking with one crutch/cane

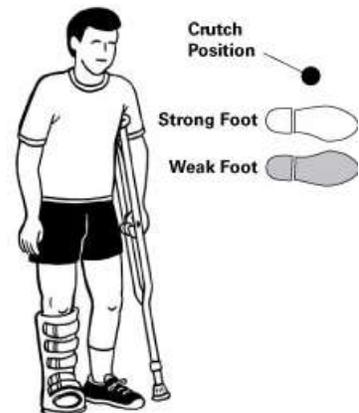
One crutch or a cane may be useful for walking when you have a slight problem with balance, some muscle weakness, injury, or pain in one leg.

- Hold the crutch or cane in the hand on the side opposite the bad leg.
- Step forward with the bad leg moving the cane forward with it at the same time. Put weight through the crutch or cane when you step on the bad leg

Remember: the crutch or cane should move forward with the bad leg at the same time.

- Step through with the good leg while putting weight through the crutch/cane.

Note: Do not use the crutch or cane on the same side as the bad leg. You may feel like you want to do this, but this could cause more issues. It would change the walking pattern and could lead to hip or back pain.



Going up and down stairs using one crutch or cane

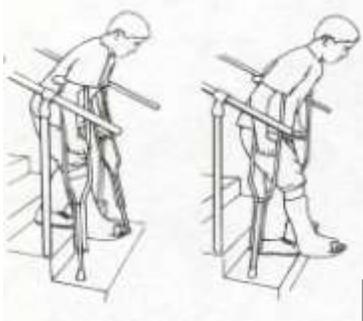
Always take one step at a time. If the stairs have a railing, you may hold onto the rail with one hand and use the crutch or cane with your opposite arm.

Going up stairs:

1. Step up with the good foot.
2. Step up with the bad foot.
3. Bring the crutch or cane up.



Going down stairs:



1. Place the crutch or cane on the step down.
2. Step down with the bad foot.
3. Step down with the good foot.

Photos courtesy of VHI

Going up and down stairs without using crutch or a cane

Use this method when the stairs are unsafe or if you are afraid to use your crutch or cane.

- **To go up stairs:** Sit on the stairs and bend your good leg. Put your hands on the next step higher. Push with your hands and good leg to lift your bottom up to the next step.
- **To go down stairs:** Sit on the stairs. Put your good foot on the next step down. Keep your hands on the same step as your bottom. Push with your hands and good leg and slide your bottom down to the next step.

Safety Tips

- Watch out for slippery floors, water puddles, ice, snow and other slippery places.
- Throw rugs are unsafe. They easily catch on the tips of your crutch or cane.
- Be careful when walking on gravel and grass.
- Wear a good tie shoe with a flat sole or tennis shoes when using crutch or a cane.
- Check the rubber tip of the crutch or cane for cracks or excessive wear. A new one can normally be bought at a drug store, discount store, or medical supply company.

ALERT: Call your child's therapist, doctor, or nurse if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.