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# How to use crutches

## Introduction

This leaflet gives you instructions on the safe use of crutches.

## What are crutches?

Crutches are medical devices that allow you to continue to be mobile while your injured leg or foot heals. Please read this leaflet carefully because it is important that you use your crutches safely and correctly to avoid any delay in your recovery. When you are issued with crutches, the nurse will adjust them for your height. Using crutches at the incorrect height can lead to back pain. Keep the handles pointing forwards and your arms close to your sides.

## Getting started

### To stand

1. Hold both crutches in one hand
2. Push up from the chair
3. Once standing, transfer one crutch into the other hand
4. Put the crutches in front of you and get your balance.



**Figure 1: Pushing up from a chair**

### To sit

1. Have the chair immediately behind you so you may feel the edge of the chair against the back of your knees
2. Put both crutches in one hand

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Department

Emergency Dept

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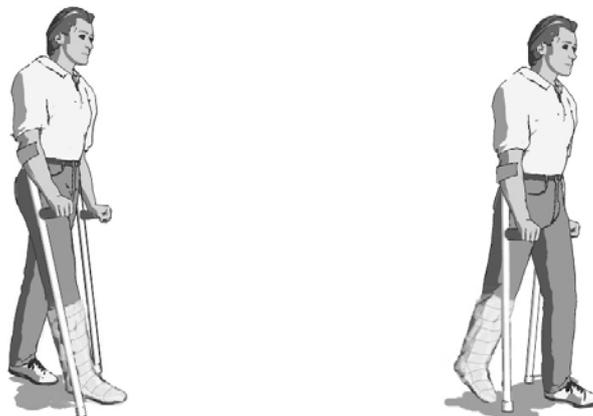
3. Hold the chair arm with the other hand
4. Sit down gently.

**Preparing to walk****When unable to weight bear on your injured leg:**

1. Stand with the handles pointing forward and your arms by your side
2. Put your crutches forward together
3. Keep your injured leg off the ground and in front of you, with knee slightly bent
4. Take your weight on your hands and through your arms
5. Bring your good leg forward, just past the crutches, to help keep you balanced
6. Repeat from step 2.

**When able to weight bear on your injured leg:**

1. Stand with the handles pointing forward and your arms by your side
2. Put both crutches forward
3. Put your injured leg one step forward taking some weight through your foot
4. Take your weight onto your hands and step further through with your good leg
5. Put both crutches forward and repeat from step 2.

**Figure 2: Non weight bearing**

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## Managing stairs

The safest way to go up and down stairs is to use your bottom, not your crutches. If there is a suitable handrail you can hold this with one hand and your crutches in the other to take your weight.

- **Going up:** Good leg, bad leg, crutch
- **Going down:** Crutch, bad leg, good leg.

## Safety advice

- Wear flat supportive shoes
- Use a chair with a high seat and arms to help you sit and stand up with ease
- Remove obstacles in your home such as loose rugs
- Avoid wet floors
- Ensure adequate lighting
- Beware of door hazards including uneven surfaces, wet leaves and ice
- Regularly inspect the crutches for wear, bent or damaged tubes or loose rivets.
- Ensure that the pin adjustment holes, used to alter crutch length, are not worn
- Check that the rubber ends are not worn or clogged with dirt or stones.

When you no longer need your crutches they **must** be returned to GIS Healthcare or you will be charged for them. They can be contacted on the numbers below to arrange collection.

If you still require crutches after 1 week but do not have a planned follow-up appointment please contact your GP for further assessment.

## Contact information

### Orthopaedic Outpatients

Cheltenham General Hospital  
Tel: 0300 422 3147

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital  
Tel: 0300 422 6137

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**GIS Healthcare**

Sevenside Trading Estate  
Sudmeadow Road, Hempsted  
Gloucester GL2 5HS  
Tel: 01452 520438  
Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm

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