



# Use of elbow crutches for non weight-bearing

## Minor Injury Unit

### Use of elbow crutches for non – weight bearing

You have been given crutches to help you move around without putting weight on or through your affected leg. This is some guidance to remind you how to use and look after your crutches. Before leaving hospital, your crutches will have been adjusted to the correct height. Your forearms should sit within the cuff and the handgrips point forward.

#### To sit:

1. Make sure you are close to the chair so you can feel it on the backs of your legs.
2. Get your balance on your good leg so your injured leg is off the floor.
3. Take the crutches off your arms.
4. Hold both the crutches in one hand by the handgrips.
5. Feel for the arm of the chair with the other hand.
6. Lower yourself into the chair.

#### To stand:

1. Hold crutches in one hand by the handgrips.
2. Push up on the arm of the chair with the other hand to stand onto your good leg.
3. Stand up and slip your arm through the arm clasp.

**Never sit down or stand up with the crutches on your arms.**

#### Walking:

1. Keep your elbows into your sides.
2. Place crutches forwards shoulder width apart.
3. Lean on the crutches so they are used to take the weight off the injured leg.
4. Step through with the good leg.
5. When you have your balance, repeat stages 1-4.

#### Stairs:

If you feel unsafe or unsteady, go up and down on your bottom.



**Ascending:**

1. Keep the injured leg off the floor and behind you.
2. Step up one step with your good leg.
3. Move your crutches onto the same step and repeat as required.

**Descending:**

1. Keep the injured leg off the floor and in front of you.
2. Move the crutches down one step.
3. Move your good leg onto the same step.

**Stairs with a handrail:**

It is advisable to use a handrail if available. Hold onto the handrail with one hand and hold both crutches in the other hand so that one is still used to help take your weight.

**General safety:**

Remove any obstacles such as loose rugs or cables. Wear a flat shoe on the good leg and avoid wet floors. Watch out for uneven surfaces, and inadequate lighting.

**Maintenance:**

Check regularly that the rubber ends are not worn or clogged with dirt or stones, or that the tubes have any areas of damage. If you have a problem with your crutches return them to the department that issues them to you.

**When you no longer need your crutches, please return them to the department of issue.**

**Exercises:**

To prevent foot swelling when you are not up and about, sit, with your leg elevated so that your foot is higher than your hip.

Support your knee to prevent strain

To improve circulation, curl and stretch your toes for 5 minutes every hour.

If your leg is not in a plaster you may have been given more active exercises to promote the healing of your injury. Do these exercises as instructed.

If you need further advice you can telephone 111

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