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Northamptonshire Healthcare  
NHS Foundation Trust

# CRUTCHES ADVICE

## PODIATRIC SURGERY

### INFORMATION LEAFLET

 01327 708102

 [nhft.nhs.uk/podiatric-surgery](https://nhft.nhs.uk/podiatric-surgery)



**MAKING A  
DIFFERENCE  
FOR YOU,  
WITH YOU**

You will have been advised on how to use your walking aid on the day of your surgery. This sheet is a reminder of what you have been advised to do.

## WHY YOU MIGHT BE ISSUED CRUTCHES

We issue crutches for the following reasons:

1. If you had a knee (popliteal) anaesthetic block to give you longer post-operative pain relief. With this technique, muscle strength and power has been temporarily reduced so you will be unsteady on your feet.
2. If the podiatric surgery team feel that you should have them (if you are unsteady on your feet or have had multiple operations).
3. If you have requested them.

## TERMS WE MIGHT USE

**Normal or full weight-bearing** – you may walk normally, using the crutches for **balance**, and to take as much pressure away from your affected (operated) foot as you feel you need (remember that the operated foot will be sore).

**Heel weight-bearing** - this means you can put some weight on the **heel** of your affected (operated) leg but not on the forefoot; you will be advised how much by the medical professional you see.

**Non weight-bearing** - this means that you should **not put any weight** on your affected (operated) leg.

## HOW TO ADJUST THE FOREARM CRUTCHES

The crutches would have been adjusted to your height and you have been told how to make any adjustments, if required.

To check the correct height of your crutches:

1. When standing upright holding the hand grip, your elbows should be slightly bent.
2. When standing upright with your hands by your side the crutch hand grips should reach just above the wrist joint.

## USING THE CRUTCHES

Take care when walking with the crutches especially on laminate flooring or smooth surfaces. Be careful of loose mats/rugs that could be a tripping hazard.

The length of time you should use your crutches is variable and dependent upon many factors - this can often be for a number of weeks following surgery. The podiatric surgery team will give you specific advice regarding duration of use.

## GETTING UP AND DOWN FROM A SEATED POSITION

**To rise from a seated position** place the crutches into an "H" shape and place on the side of the operated foot. Then place one hand onto both handles and with your free hand push down on your seat to. Lift your operated foot slightly off the ground whilst standing. Once standing put your operated foot down (as long as you are not non weight bearing) then place each hand through the cuff of the crutches and hold the handles (facing forward).

**When you come to sit down** again, remember to remove your arms from the cuff **before** sitting. Make sure that the chair is lined up right behind you. Put both crutches together to make the "H" shape to support you as you sit down. Slowly lower yourself onto the seat.

## WALKING: WEIGHT-BEARING

For stability in standing, each crutch should be slightly in front and out to the side of your feet.

Stand with the crutches by your side, place the crutches at arm's length in front of you. Step forward with the affected (operated) foot first, then step up to your crutches on your stronger (non-operated) side.

**Remember:** crutches, then poorly foot, then good foot. Always stay behind the crutches.

## WALKING: NON WEIGHT-BEARING

For when you are not allowed to put weight on your injured leg.

1. Keep the affected (operated) foot off the ground by holding it slightly in front or behind with the knee slightly bent.
2. The crutches should be moved one pace forward and shoulder width apart.
3. Lean weight onto the hands and swing through the crutches keeping your weight forward.
4. When you are balanced repeat from step two.

## TURNING

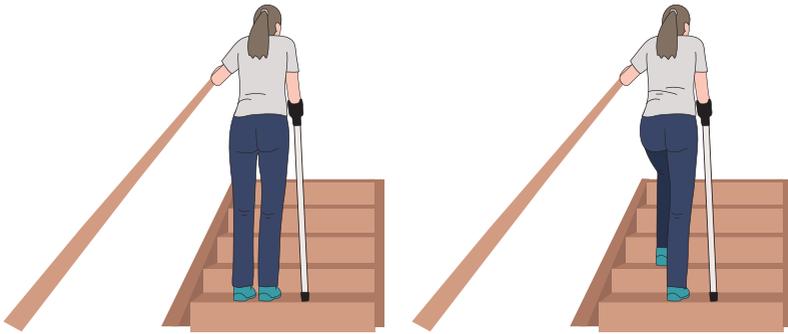
When turning, make sure you step round with the elbow crutches in a small circle rather than twisting on the spot.

On the day of your surgery it may be advisable to go up on your bottom.

## USING STAIRS: WEIGHT-BEARING

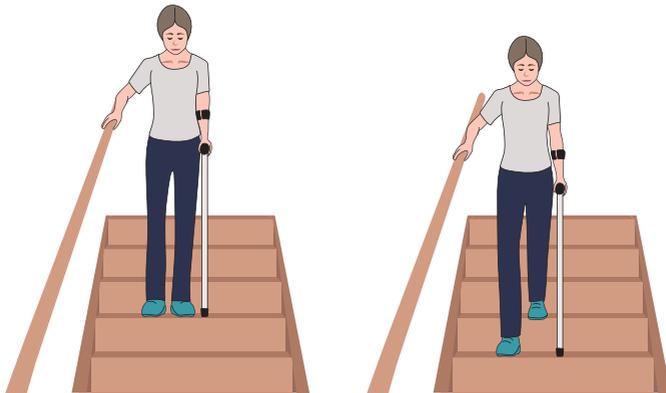
### Going up

Stand close to the handrail and hold on with one hand. Hold on to one of the crutches in your other hand, as shown in the picture above. Step up with your good leg first, support yourself with the handrail and the supporting crutch. Lift up your injured leg, then the crutch.



### Going down

Stand close to the handrail and hold on with one hand. Hold on to one of the crutches in your other hand, as when going up. Step down with your bad leg first, support yourself with the handrail and supporting crutch, and then step down with your good leg.



## USING WALKING FRAMES

Walking frames are designed to:

- Increase support in standing and walking
- Take pressure off your affected (operated) leg if you are partially weight-bearing.

## STANDING

Always push up from the surface you are sitting on i.e. chair/bed. Never pull yourself up using the frame - it may tip back resulting in further injury. Once standing, place each hand on the hand grips.

## SITTING

Turn the frame until the chair/bed is touching the back of your legs. Reach back with each hand for the arm rest on the chair/bed. In a slow and controlled manner lower yourself into a sitting position.

## ON STAIRS

**Never** use a frame to go up or down the stairs.

**If it is not possible to walk up and down the stairs it may be necessary to go up and down on your bottom.**

Please follow all instructions given to you by the podiatric surgery team. **DO NOT** hesitate to contact us with any concerns.

**A SPACE FOR YOUR NOTES**

# PLEASE ASK IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR SURGICAL CARE.



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Inspected and rated

**Outstanding** ☆



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Information from © The American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons, Cullen NP, Singh D.  
Plantar fasciitis: a review. Br J Hosp Med 2006;67:72-6

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