How to use crutches safely

Non-weight bearing technique

This leaflet has been written by the Paediatric Physiotherapy Team at St George's University Hospital to explain how to use your crutches safely.
If you have any further questions, please speak to the doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is non-weight bearing?

You are not allowed to put any of your body weight through your affected leg. You must keep the foot elevated off the floor at all times when walking or standing. In sitting or lying your foot can resting on the floor.

Standing up

Remember to keep your affected leg off the floor throughout this movement.

1) Place your crutches together to form the H shape in the picture below.

2) Use one arm to push down on the crutch handles and the other on the surface you are sat on.

3) Once you are stood, and you have your balance, place your arms through both crutches, ready to walk.

Sitting down

Remember to keep your affected leg off the floor throughout this movement.

1) Bring your crutches together in front of you. Place them back into an H shape holding the handles with one hand.

2) Reach your arm back for the surface behind you and slowly lower yourself to sit down

1)

2)

Walking

Remember to keep your affected leg off the floor throughout this movement.

1) Place both in front of you a short step length away.

2) Move your affected leg forwards until it is in line with the crutches (not touching the floor)

3) Step/hop your non-affected leg in line with your affected leg.

Walking up stairs

Make sure you start as close to the stairs as you can.

If you have no hand rails use both crutches
(Example A below)

If you have one hand rail, hold on to the rail with one hand
and hold your crutch in the opposite hand
(Example B below)

A)

B)

Walking up stairs technique

Remember to keep your affected leg off the floor throughout this movement.

1) Standing in front of your steps, hop your non-affected leg on to the step (if you have a stair rail: place one hand on the rail and one hand on the crutch).

2) Push through your hands and bring your affected leg up towards the step.

3) Bring your crutches up onto the step.

Walking down stairs technique

Remember to keep your affected leg off the floor throughout this movement.

1) Place your crutches on the step below (if you have a stair rail: place one hand on the rail and one crutch on the step below).

2) Hold your affected leg over the step below

3) Push through your arms and bring your affected leg to the step below.

2)

3)

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the information in this leaflet let the ward team know or alternatively, please contact the Paediatric Therapy Team on 0208 725 1890 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).
Tel: 020 8725 2453   **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices
NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health. **Web:** www.nhs.uk

NHS 111
You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones. **Tel:** 111

AccessAble
You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk).
The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.

PING
This has been endorsed by the Patient Information Group