

Using Elbow Crutches

Service User Information Leaflet

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Produced by Fife Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Service

Safe use of your elbow crutches:

- Elbow crutches should be used with the handle facing forwards.
- Make sure the push buttons are secure and locked in place.
- Make sure the rubber stopper (ferrule) has sufficient grip and beware of slippery surfaces such as wet floors, wet leaves etc.
- Wear flat supportive shoes when using your elbow crutches
- Never exceed the weight limit of the stick. This can be found in the instruction booklet or on the stick itself.

Care and maintenance:

- Regularly check your crutches for signs and symptoms of wear and tear or damage especially around the adjustment holes.
- If your rubber stopper is smooth, worn or split it will require replaced.
- If they get dirty wipe over with a soft cloth

Adjusting your elbow crutches:

- When you receive your crutches adjustment should be done for you.
- If your crutch or crutches have been adjusted properly you should be able to maintain an upright posture during use.
- If you need to adjust your crutch your elbow should be slightly bent and your wrist in line with the handle while the rubber stopper end is in contact with the floor in an upright position.
- Adjusting your crutches allows your body weight to be taken through the crutch.
- If they are not adjusted for you or the spring pins move by accident, follow the steps below to help you get the right length for you.

To adjust your crutch or crutches:

- To adjust the crutch up or down press the two spring pins together (Fig1).
- Push the leg in and turn slightly.

- Adjust the leg to the required length then turn and relocate the spring pins (see above for details).
- Ensure the buttons are protruding through the holes before using.

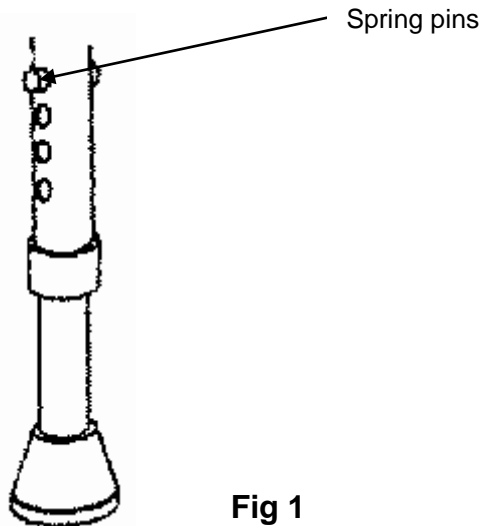


Fig 1

Using your crutch or crutches

Walking

- If you are **unable** to take any weight through your sore or affected leg, keep it off the ground by holding it out slightly in front of you with your knee slightly bent (Fig 2).
- Move the crutches one pace forward, slightly apart and level,
- Then move the body forwards between the crutches allowing the good/stronger leg to swing through level with the crutches (Fig 2).
- If you are **able** to take some weight through your sore leg and have been advised to do so (Fig 3).
- Move the crutches one pace forward then place the sore or affected leg on the ground in line with the crutches,
- This will support some of your body weight.
- Then step through with the good/stronger leg just pasted your crutches.
- Place weight on the injured leg only as instructed by your clinician.

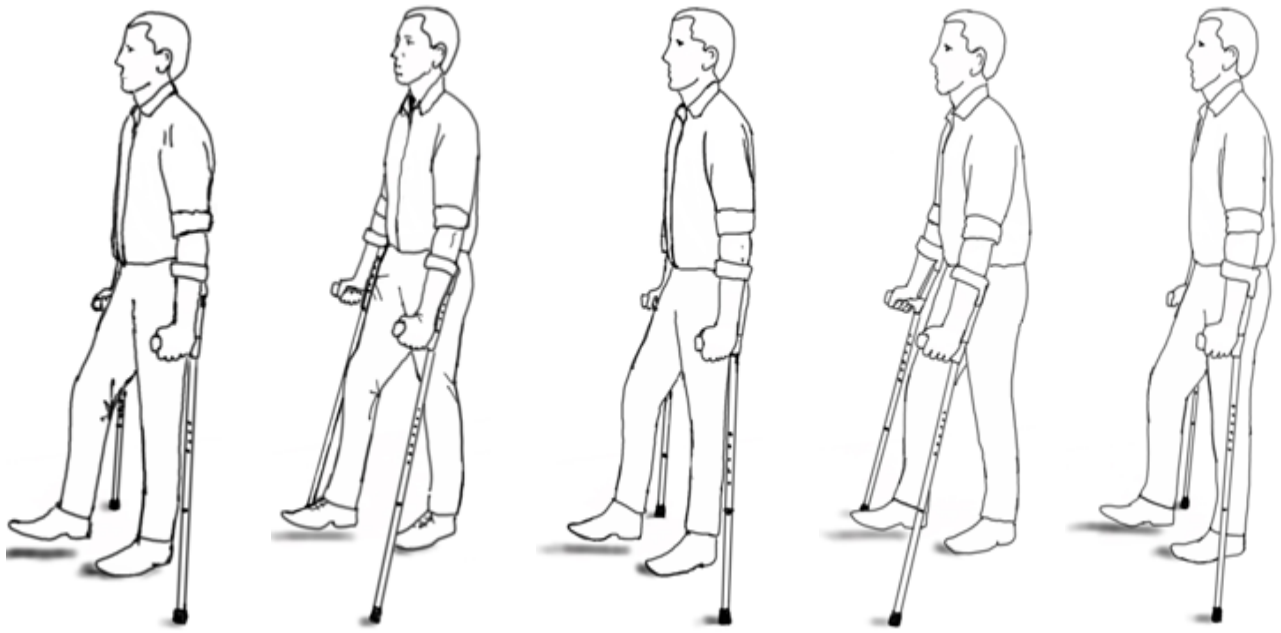


Fig 2

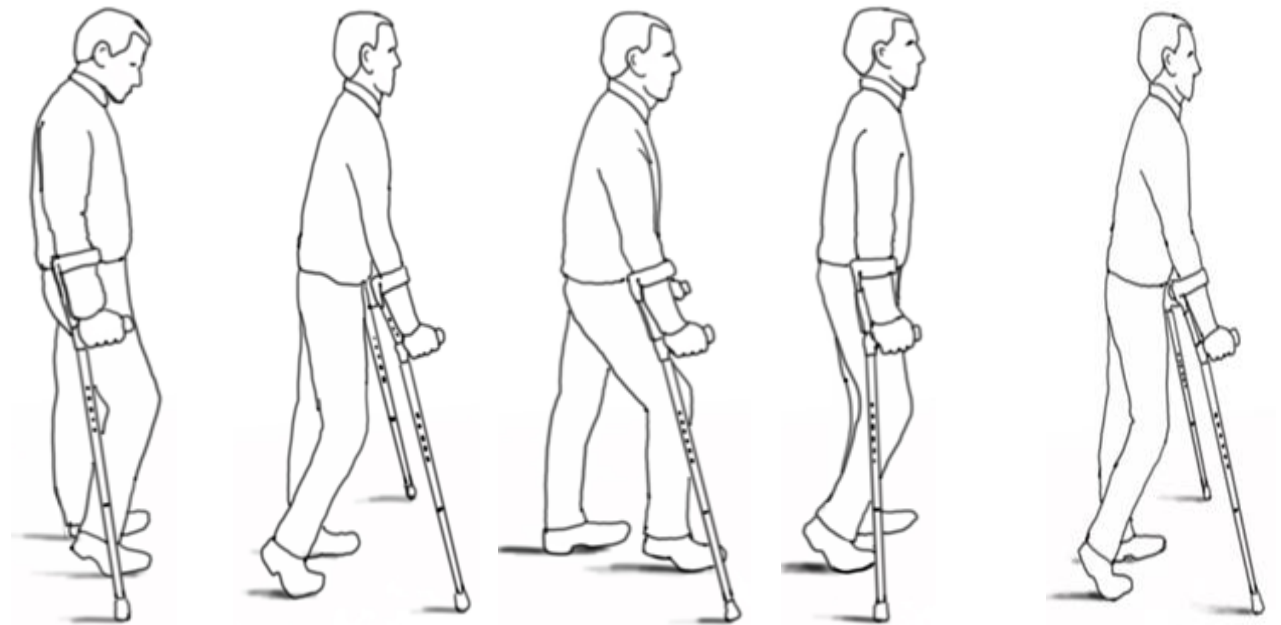


Fig 3

Getting up from a chair

- Hold your crutches on your good side with the handles forming an “H” shape,
- Sit on the edge of the seat.
- Push up with one arm from the chair and the other on the crutches.
- Once standing put your arms into the cuffs of the crutches and place the crutches one pace in front of you ready for moving forwards.

Sitting down onto a chair

- Position yourself with your knees to the back of your seat.
- Remove both arms from the crutches.
- Place the handles together, forming an “H” shape.
- Hold onto the crutches with the hand of your unaffected side placing the other hand onto the arm of the chair.
- Using the arm of the chair and the crutches for support slowly lower yourself to the seat.

Going up/down stairs with a hand rail

Walking upstairs using one crutch and a handrail.

- Hold onto the handrail with one hand and the crutches with the other (Fig 4).
- First take a step up with your good/stronger leg.
- The crutch supports the injured leg.
- Then take a step with your injured leg.
- Then bring crutches up onto the step next to both feet.
- Always go one step at a time.

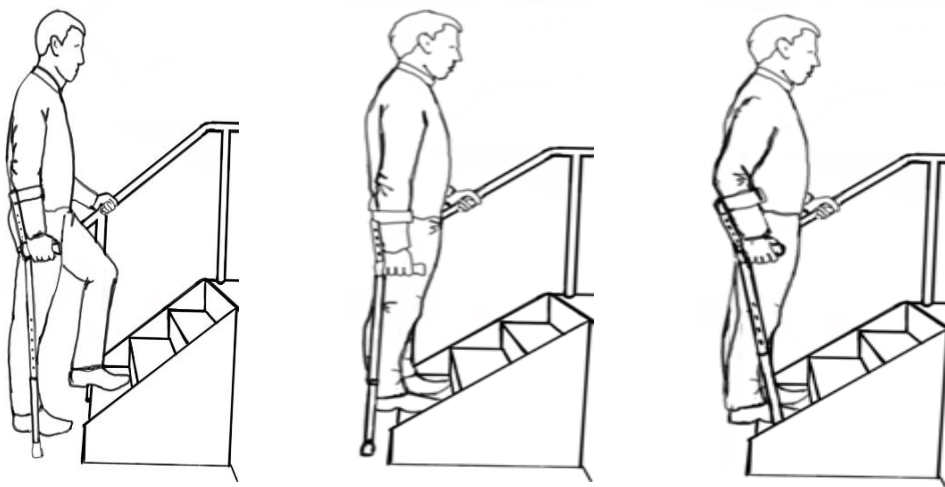


Fig 4

Walking down stairs using one crutch and a handrail.

- Hold onto the handrail with one hand and the crutches with the other (Fig 5).
- First put your crutch one step down.
- Then take a step with your injured leg.
- Then take a step down with your good/stronger leg.
- Hold onto the handrail all the time.
- Always go one step at a time.

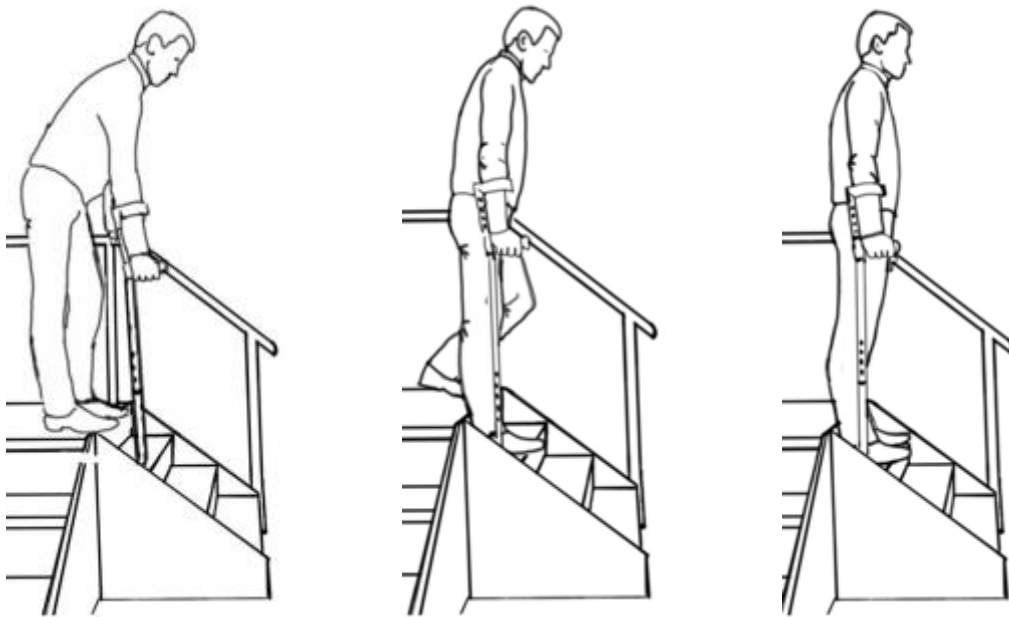


Fig 5

Going up/down stairs with no handrail.

Walking up stairs with no handrail

- Stand with your crutch/crutches close to the stair edge (Fig 6).
- First take a step up with your good/stronger leg.
- Then take a step up with your sore or affected leg.
- Then bring your crutches up onto the step level with your feet.
- Always go one step at a time.

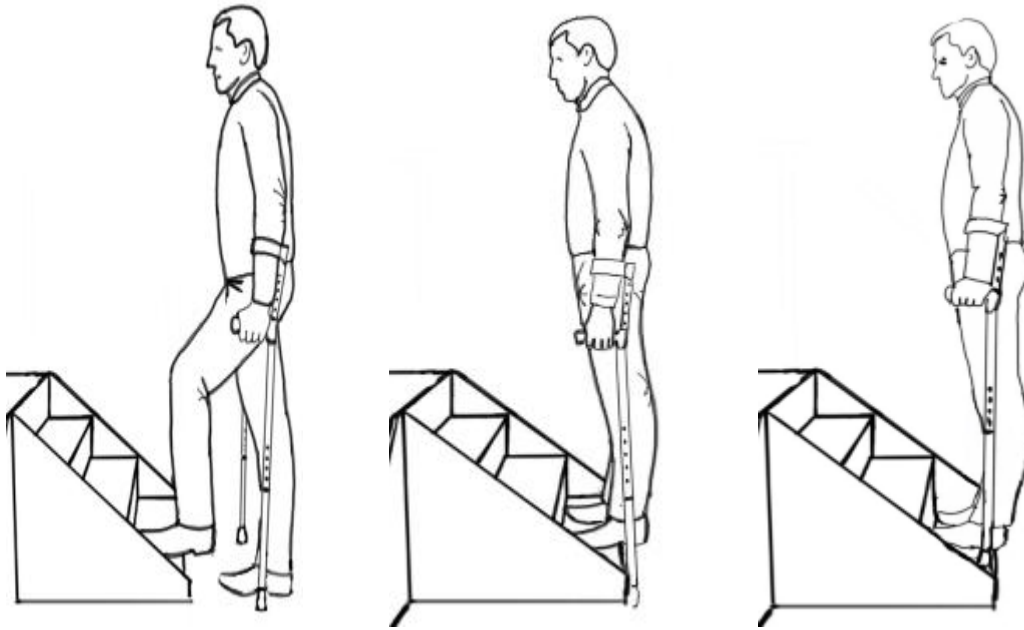


Fig 6

Walking down stairs with no handrails.

- Stand with your crutch/crutches close to the top edge of the stairs (Fig 7).
- First put your crutch/crutches one step down.
- Then take a step down with your sore or affected leg.
- Then take a step down with your good/stronger leg, onto the same step as your sore or affected leg.
- Always go one step at a time.

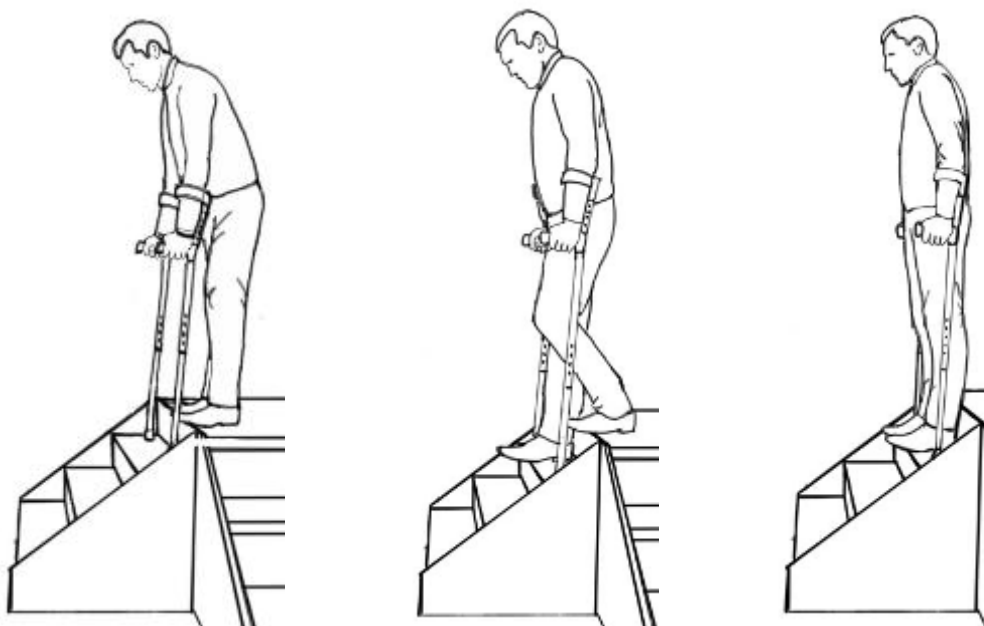


Fig 7

For Further Advice: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/tests-and-treatments/medicines-and-medical-aids/walking-aids/using-crutches>