



The Use of Crutches

To fit crutches properly, stand straight up and the top of the crutch should measure around three fingers from the armpit.

While walking there should not be any weight applied to your under arms (because you can cause permanent damage to your axillary nerve). The weight should be applied to your hands and chest wall (ribs) so that elbows bend to 30 degrees allowing efficient use of arm muscles.

The following are specific walking instructions:

- A** Non-Weight Bearing: If the doctor told you that you cannot put any weight on the affected leg, when walking, you need to set the crutches about one foot ahead of you, and swing the affected leg through, while stepping on the unaffected leg. You should not set the affected leg down on the ground.
- B** Toe-Touch Weight Bearing: If the doctor told you that you are toe touch weight bearing, you can set your leg down on the ground and apply minimal pressure to the affected leg. You are to step with the affected leg at the same time that you set the crutches down, applying most of your weight through your hands to the crutches.
- C** Partial Weight Bearing: If the doctor told you that you are to be partial weight bearing or weight bearing as tolerated with the crutches, you are allowed to step on the affected leg, but not with all of your weight. When walking, you can step on the affected leg at the same time that you set the crutches down, putting about equal pressure on your hands as on your leg.

If you feel unstable with crutches, a walker may be better. The same principles as above apply to the use of a walker.

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