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CRUTCHES WALKING INSTRUCTIONS

Find the Proper Height:

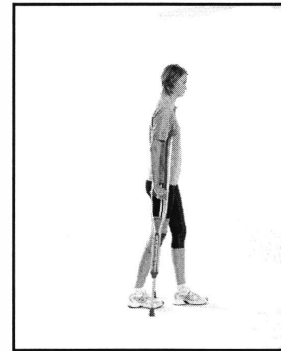
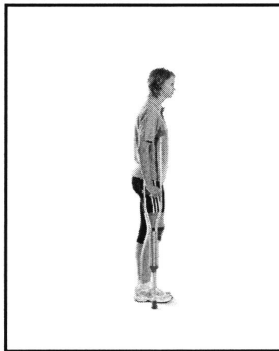
- Stand erect with shoes on and shoulders relaxed. There should be a space of 3-4 fingers' width between the armpit and the top of the crutch.
- Your weight should be supported by your hands with elbows slightly bent.
- The tips of the crutches should be about 6 inches from the outside of your shoes.
- Never lean on your armpits. Keep the top of the crutch against your chest.

Do a Safety Check:

- Check the wing nuts periodically... they should always be tight!
- Replace the crutch tips if they are worn out as this could cause slipping.
- Special crampon (spiked) tips are available at local drugstores. These are a necessity in wintry conditions.
- **SUPREME** care should be taken when walking on wet and slippery surfaces! You will do less harm to your knee putting weight on it then if you slip and fall.

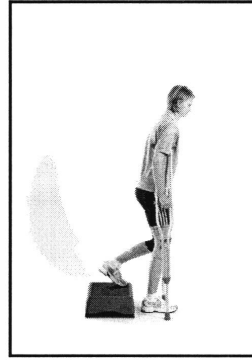
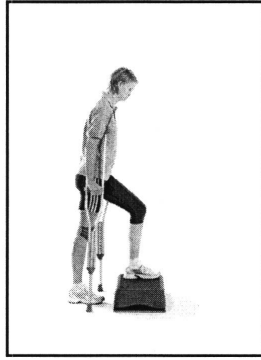
"Touch-Down" Crutch Walking:

- In the same motion, move both crutches and the injured leg ahead in one small step. Touch-down for balance (about 10 lbs. of pressure on the foot), and swing the other leg through to maintain a normal gait pattern. Repeat until you get where you're going!
- Progressively add weight to the involved leg as instructed by your doctor until you are full weight bearing with confidence.
- "Touch-Down" crutch walking is less stressful to the knee than trying to keep your foot balanced off the ground and thus tends to be the least painful way to use crutches. Obviously, any time the knee is dependent (i.e. lower than your heart) it can cause some discomfort. If even "touch-down" weight bearing hurts, it's time to get your knee elevated and iced.



Stair Climbing:

- The crutches stay on the same level as the involved leg. **GO UP A STEP** with the uninvolved leg taking the weight. Now bring the crutches and the involved leg up.
- **GOING DOWN A STEP**, place the crutches down first with the involved leg. Transfer the appropriate weight to the handgrips and lower yourself down onto the uninvolved leg.
- If you are unable to do the above, sit down and go from step to step. This might not be pretty, but at least it's safe.

**Getting Rid Of Your Crutches:**

- As your knee gets stronger, you should be able to put less and less weight on the crutches and more and more weight on your knee.
- When you feel ready, practice a normal walking pattern in the house, but continue using crutches outside. Ask someone to watch you and make sure you are not limping.
- Crutches are not an all or nothing phenomena. Even if you have not used crutches in the past week, you might still pull them out for a ballgame, shopping or any time you will be on your feet for an extended period with no chance to rest.

If you have a busy day and the knee is sore, don't hesitate to get back on the crutches for a day to allow the knee to calm down. Remember- crutches are part of the "R" in RICE.