Getting started
The purpose of a walker is to add stability and relieve or decrease pain.

- Make sure the tips and grips are securely in place.
- Make sure all hardware is tight and check it at least once a week.
- Clean out the walker tips and free them of dirt and stones.
- Walker tips should be replaced if they become worn or have a smooth appearance. This can cause them to be slippery.
- Remove all loose throw rugs to avoid falls. Make sure pets stay clear when you are walking, so you don’t lose your balance and fall.
- Wear sturdy, supportive, non-slippery footwear to avoid falls.
- Avoid bulky purses. They may become entangled or throw you off balance.

Walker measurement
To determine proper walker height, stand with the walker in front of you so that you are able to grasp the grips of the walker. Stand straight with your arms relaxed at your sides. If the walker is the proper height, the handgrips should be at the level of your wrists.

Walking with a walker
Always make sure you maintain the weight-bearing status your physician has given you.

Place the walker in front of you so that the rear legs of the walker are in line with your toes. Step with the affected leg first (approximately halfway into the walker) and then step into the walker with the unaffected leg. Bear most of the weight on the hands and the unaffected leg, unless instructed otherwise.

Important: When walking with a walker, it is important not to place the walker too far in front of you (past the end of your toes). This could cause you to lose your balance or have back pain. It is also important to place the walker with all four legs on the floor before taking any steps. Placing just two legs at a time on the floor or carrying the walker while walking could cause a loss of balance or a fall.

Getting into and out of a chair
To sit down, back up to the chair until you feel the chair touching the back of your legs. Reach back to the chair with both hands and lower yourself down into the chair. It may be helpful to slide the affected leg forward to avoid discomfort.

To stand up
To stand up, place the walker within reach in front of you. Place both hands on the arms of the chair (or the bed) and push yourself to a standing position. It is helpful to bend at the waist and lean forward while pushing up to a standing position using the unaffected leg as your power up leg. Once standing and balanced, grasp the walker.
Getting into and out of a car

Make sure your seat is pushed back as far as possible (for plenty of leg room) and recline the back of the seat as far as possible when getting in and out of the car. To get into a car, sit on the passenger side or in the back seat of a four-door vehicle. Back up to the seat of the car, reach back to the edge of the seat with both hands and lower yourself onto the seat. Pull one leg at a time into the car.

To get out of a car, swing one leg at a time outside the car and place the walker in front of you. Push up from the seat with both hands. Once standing and balanced, grasp the walker.

Reminder: For your safety, do not grasp the car door at any time. It may swing and cause you to lose your balance.

Going up and down stairs

It is also very important and necessary that another person is available to assist you. This person will face the steps and support the front of the walker.

To go up stairs, it is safest to go up backward (when you do not have hand rails). While standing in front of the steps, turn so your back is facing the steps. Place the walker so the back legs are against the steps. Place your unaffected leg on the step behind you and bring your affected leg up to meet it. Once you have your balance, bring the walker up to the same step while making sure the back legs of the walker are placed against the rear of the step. It will be necessary to have someone support the front of the walker before you proceed up the next step.

To go down the stairs with a walker, get close to the edge of the step and place the walker on the next step down with the back legs against the rear of the step. With someone supporting the front of the walker, step down with your affected leg first (supporting your weight through your hands) and then step down with the unaffected leg.

A helpful reminder for going up and down stairs is “up with the good leg and down with the bad leg.”

Stepping onto a curb

Forward approach: Approach the curb until your feet are just a few inches away. Place the walker up onto the curb. Step up with the unaffected leg first, followed by the affected leg.

Backward approach: Back up to the curb with the back tips of the walker touching the curb. Step up with your unaffected leg first, followed by your affected leg, then lift the walker. Once up on the curb, take an additional step backwards before turning yourself around.

Stepping down from a curb

Forward approach: Place walker down on the ground. Step down with the affected leg followed by unaffected leg.
Getting started
The purpose of a cane is to add stability and relieve or decrease pain.

- Make sure the tips and grip are securely in place.
- Make sure all hardware is tight and check it at least once a week.
- Clean out the cane tips and free them of dirt and stones.
- Cane tips should be replaced if they become worn or have a smooth appearance. This can cause them to be slippery.
- Remove all loose throw rugs to avoid falls. Make sure pets stay clear when you are walking, so you don’t lose your balance and fall.
- Wear sturdy, supportive, non-slippery footwear to avoid falls.
- Avoid bulky purses. They may become entangled or throw you off balance.

Cane measurement
When standing up straight with your arm completely relaxed at your side, the top of your cane should come to the wrist joint.

Walking with a cane
To walk with a cane, the cane should be held in the hand opposite the affected side. Place the cane forward first, about six to 12 inches. Step with the affected leg and follow through with the unaffected leg.

Remember the sequence: the cane, the affected leg, and then the unaffected leg.

Getting into and out of a chair
To sit down, back up to the chair until you feel the edge of the seat against your legs. Reach back for the arms of the chair with both hands. It is best to grasp the cane with the fingers of your stronger hand and use the heel of your hand on the arm of the chair.

To stand up, scoot to the edge of the chair, placing your affected leg slightly ahead. Put the cane in your hand on your unaffected side. Push up from the chair with both hands to a standing position. Make sure your balance is good prior to walking.
Getting into and out of a car

To get into a car, sit on the passenger side or in the back seat of a four-door vehicle. Move the seat back as far as possible to give yourself the most room. Back up to the seat of the car, reach back to the edge of the seat with both hands and the cane, and lower yourself onto the seat. Pull one leg at a time into the car. Be sure to use your seat belt for safety.

To get out of the car, swing one leg at a time outside the car and hold the cane in the hand opposite the affected side. Place both hands on the seat and push yourself to a standing position.

Reminder: For safety, do not grasp the car door at any time. It may swing and cause you to lose your grip.

Going up and down stairs

A helpful reminder for going up and down stairs is “up with the good leg, down with the bad leg.”

To go up stairs without a handrail, step up with the unaffected leg first, followed by the affected leg and the cane. You can use this same technique for stepping up on a curb.

To go down stairs without using a handrail, place the cane on the next lower step, followed by the affected leg, then the unaffected leg. You can use this same technique for stepping down from a curb.

If you have a handrail, use the cane in the opposite hand and follow the same procedure – up with the unaffected leg, followed by affected leg and the cane; down with the cane, followed by the affected leg, then the unaffected leg.

A helpful reminder for going up and down stairs is “up with the good leg and down with the bad leg.”
Getting started
The purpose of crutches is to enable mobility, add stability and relieve or decrease pain.

- Make sure tips and grips are securely in place.
- Make sure all hardware is tight. Be sure to check it at least once a week.
- Clean out crutch tips and free them of dirt and stones.
- Crutch tips should be replaced if they become worn or have a smooth appearance. This can cause them to be slippery.
- Have someone nearby to assist you.
- Remove all loose throw rugs to avoid falls.
- Make sure pets stay clear when you are walking, so you don’t lose your balance and fall.
- Wear sturdy, supportive, non-slippery footwear to avoid falls.
- Avoid bulky purses. They may become entangled or throw you off balance.

When using crutches, it is important to bear weight on the hands, not the underarm or armpit. Bearing weight on the underarms can compress blood vessels and nerves causing irritation, numbness or tingling in the hands.

Crutch measurement

**First**, stand with one crutch under each arm, making certain that the crutch tips rest on the ground on each side of your body and six inches in front of your feet.

**Next**, stand tall and place three fingers together between your underarms and the pads of the crutches. There should be enough space between your underarms and the pads to avoid pressure on your underarms.

Adjust the hand grips so that your elbows have a 25 – 30 degree bend. Another way to determine the proper hand grip height is to straighten your arm at your side with the crutch between your arm and body. The hand grip should be at wrist level.

Walking with crutches

With the crutches properly placed under your arms, place both crutch tips 6 – 12 inches ahead of you.

If your physician allows you to put weight on your affected leg, you should always step with that leg first. If you are not permitted to place weight on the affected leg, step with the unaffected leg up to or slightly past the crutches while pushing down on the hand grips.

Getting into and out of a chair

**To sit down**, back up to the chair until you feel the seat touching the back of your legs. Put both crutches together in your hand on the affected side, and then reach back for the chair with the opposite hand. Bring the affected leg slightly forward. Lower yourself down into the chair using the crutches and chair arm for support.

**To stand up**, hold both crutches together on the affected side with your hands through the hand grips. Place your hand from the unaffected side on the arm of the chair and push yourself to a standing position using the crutches and chair arm for support. Once standing and balanced, place the crutches under each arm.

To go up stairs

**To go up a curb or stairs without using a handrail**, keep both crutches under your arms. Step up one step with the unaffected leg, followed by the affected leg and crutches. Check your balance before you proceed to the next step.
To go down a curb or stairs without using a handrail, start at the edge of the steps, keeping your hips in line with your shoulders. Keep both crutches under your arms.

Bending at the hips and knees, slowly lower the crutches to the next step down. Keep your head up to prevent leaning too far forward, which could cause you to fall. Placing most (or all) of your weight on your hands, lower your hips and step down with the affected leg to the next step down.

A helpful reminder for going up and down stairs is “up with the good leg and down with the bad leg.”

Using stairs with one crutch and a handrail

To go up stairs using a handrail, get as close to the side with the handrail as possible. While holding the handrail with one hand and the crutch under the opposite arm, step up with the unaffected leg. Then step up with the affected leg and the crutch.

To go down stairs

To go down stairs using a handrail, lower the crutch and the affected leg to the next step down. Placing most of your weight on your hands, lower your hips and the unaffected leg to the next lower step.

Note: If you are using two crutches, take the crutch out from under the arm on the handrail side. On the opposite side, with one crutch in place securely under your arm, hold the “free” crutch with your fingers below the handgrip closer to the top end.

Getting into and out of a car

To get into a car, back up to the seat of the car and place both crutches together in the left hand. Reach back to the edge of the seat with the right hand, and lower yourself onto the seat. Pull one leg at a time into the car.

To get out of a car, swing one leg at a time outside the car and hold the crutches together in the left hand. Place the right hand on the seat and push yourself into a standing position. After gaining your balance, place the crutches under your arms.

Reminder: For your safety, do not grasp the car door at any time. It may swing and cause you to lose your balance.

Stepping up onto a curb

Approach the curb until your feet and crutches are just a few inches away. Step up with your unaffected leg first, followed by the crutches and your affected leg.