

HOW TO USE CRUTCHES

Most Important Crutch Safety Tips:

- Have a friend or health care personnel with you when you are first learning to use your crutches.
- Make sure all parts of the crutches (including the bottom of the crutches) are clean and secure before you use them.
- **Put your weight on your hands, not on your armpits** (which could cause problems with your skin and nerves).
- **When walking, lead with the crutches/your bad limb in front, then follow with your good limb.**
- Watch where you are going. Avoid things in your path that could cause you to slip and fall, like slippery or wet floors, loose rugs, and electrical cords.
- Pay attention to your balance. **Go slow and steady.**

Going up and down stairs

- **Going up stairs: "Up with the good"**
 1. Step up with the good foot first on the first step,
 2. then bring up the crutches to the step,
 3. then follow with your affected limb.
- **Going down stairs: "down with the bad"**
 1. Lead with your affected limb and crutches going down the step,
 2. then step down with your good limb.
- You may want to try using the handrail on the stairs instead of crutches. if you do this hold both crutches under your other arm.
- Be mindful of your balance. Take care to keep your hips beneath you.

Sitting down and standing up

1. Choose a sturdy chair that has armrests and no wheels.
2. Use the arm on your affected side to hold both crutches.
3. Use the arm on your good side to stabilize yourself on the armrest.
4. **Slowly sit down or stand up putting your weight on your good leg and pressing up from the armrest.**



"Up
with the
good"



"Down
with the
bad"



Pictured is Michael Macaluso, the 2003-04
Notre Dame Leprechaun

Saint Liam Hall, Notre Dame
(574)631-7497 - uhs.nd.edu