



Department of Physical Therapy

Crutches: How to Go Up and Down Steps

Your surgeon has decided how much weight you can safely put on your affected leg. Please make sure that you do not place more weight on your affected leg than instructed.

“Up with the good, down with the bad” is the easiest way to recall how to climb stairs with crutches. Remember that your “bad” (or affected) leg is the one that you had surgery on.

Going Up

- Stand close to the bottom step.
- Push down on the hand grips. Squeeze the crutch pads between your arms and your ribs.
- Support your body weight on your hands—not under your arms. Remember: Never lean on the arm pads of your crutches. Doing so could damage the nerves and blood vessels under your arms.
- Step up with the non-affected leg first. Do not place more weight on your affected leg than instructed.
- Use your non-affected leg to lift the rest of your body and the crutches up the step.



Going Down

- Stand close to the edge of the top step.
- Move crutches down to the first step.
- Push down on the hand grips. Squeeze the crutch pads between your arms and your ribs. Remember: Never lean on the arm pads of your crutches. Doing so could damage the nerves and blood vessels under your arms.
- Step down to the first step with your affected leg. Do not place more weight on this leg than instructed.
- Support your body weight on your hands—not under your arms.
- Step down with the non-affected leg.



Your Care Partner should be behind you as you go up the steps and in front of you as you go down the steps.

If you have any questions about this information, please call **(864) 797-1201**.