USING CRUTCHES OR A CANE

Fitting the Crutches:
1. Standing tall, place the crutches under your arms. The tips should be just slightly in front of your toes but 6 inches to the sides of your feet.
2. With your shoulders relaxed, the length of the crutches should be adjusted so that 2 to 3 fingers can be placed between the top of the crutches and your armpits.
3. The handgrips should be adjusted so that with your arms hanging straight at your side the handgrip is even with your wrist. When you grip the handle, your elbow will bend slightly.

General Ideas on Crutch or Cane Use:
1. Inspect the tips (rubber cap on the bottom of the crutch) and handgrips. The tips of the crutches must have good rubber on them. Any exposed wood or metal will create a slippery interface between the crutch and the ground. Replace any worn tips or handgrips. Regularly check that any screws on the crutches are kept tight.
2. Never remove any parts of your crutches.
3. Wear shoes with a low heal that will not slip off your feet. A sneaker or a dress shoe that ties on is preferred.
4. Put your weight on your hands, not through your armpit.
5. When using the crutches you should squeeze the top of the crutch between your upper arms and chest.
6. Do not lean on your crutches when standing still. The armpit is not meant to have that much pressure placed on it. When standing, put your crutch tips slightly ahead of you but you should stand up straight.
7. Watch for hidden dangers such as slippery surfaces, throw rugs, and uneven surfaces. Inspect your home or work and change or remove things that could be hazardous.
8. Watch out for pets and children. Pets and little ones inadvertently can get in the way. Always use more caution around them.
9. In the event that you do fall, throw the crutches out to the side and attempt to soften your fall with your arms and hands. Try to protect the injured leg from twisting or being struck.

Crutch Walking – NO Weight Bearing
(Your doctor has instructed you NOT to put weight on your injured leg)
1. Keeping your weight on your uninjured leg. Place both crutches forward at the same time. Place them slightly out to the side and do not overextend.
2. Placing your weight through the handgrips, swing your uninjured leg through the crutches.
3. Land heel first with your uninjured foot slightly ahead of your crutches.
4. Make sure you have your balance and repeat.
Crutch Walking – PARTIAL Weight Bearing
(Your doctor has given you permission to put weight on your injured leg.)
1. Place both crutches and your injured leg slightly forward at the same time.
2. Placing your weight on both the handgrips and your injured leg, swing your uninjured foot forward so it is slightly in front of your injured leg.
3. Make sure you have your balance and repeat.

Sitting:
1. Walk straight up to the chair or bed you will sit on. When you are a step away, turn and back up to the surface until you feel it on the back of your leg.
2. Place your crutches together on your injured side holding on to both with your one hand.
3. Reach back to the seat or bed with your other hand.
4. Put your injured leg out in front of you and slowly lower yourself.

Standing:
1. Place your crutches together on your injured side holding on to both with your one hand.
2. Put your injured leg out slightly in front of you.
3. Using your other hand, push up from the seat or bed and get your balance.
4. Place the crutches under your arms in the normal fashion.

Up and Down Stairs:
1. Stand close to the first step near the railing if one is available. Check and make sure the railing is sturdy.
2. Use one hand on the railing if available and place both crutches under your opposite arm holding them in one hand. If there is no railing available use crutches under both arms.
3. Always take your time and make sure you have your balance before going to the next step.

Going Up the Stairs:
1. Leave the crutches on the level where you are standing.
2. Support your weight evenly on your crutches and the railing or on your crutches.
3. Raise you uninjured leg to the higher step.
4. Straighten your uninjured leg and raise your injured leg and crutches up to the level you are standing on.

Going Down the Stairs:
1. Place your crutches on the lower step and extend your injured leg forward to the lower step.
2. Support your weight evenly on your crutches and the railing or on your crutches.
3. Lower your uninjured leg down to the lower step.

“Up with the good foot, down with the bad foot”
Using a Cane or One Crutch

Fitting a Cane:
1. Standing up straight with your arm hanging at your side the highest part of the cane should be even with your wrist. When you grip the handle, your elbow should bend slightly.
2. Inspect the tips (rubber cap on the bottom of the cane). The tips of the cane must have good rubber on them. Any exposed wood or metal will create a slippery interface between the cane and the ground. Replace any worn tips.

Using a Cane:
1. The cane should be used in the opposite side of the injured hip or leg.
2. Place the cane and your injured leg slightly forward at the same time.
3. Placing your weight on the cane’s handgrip and your injured leg, swing your uninjured foot forward so it is slightly in front of your injured leg.