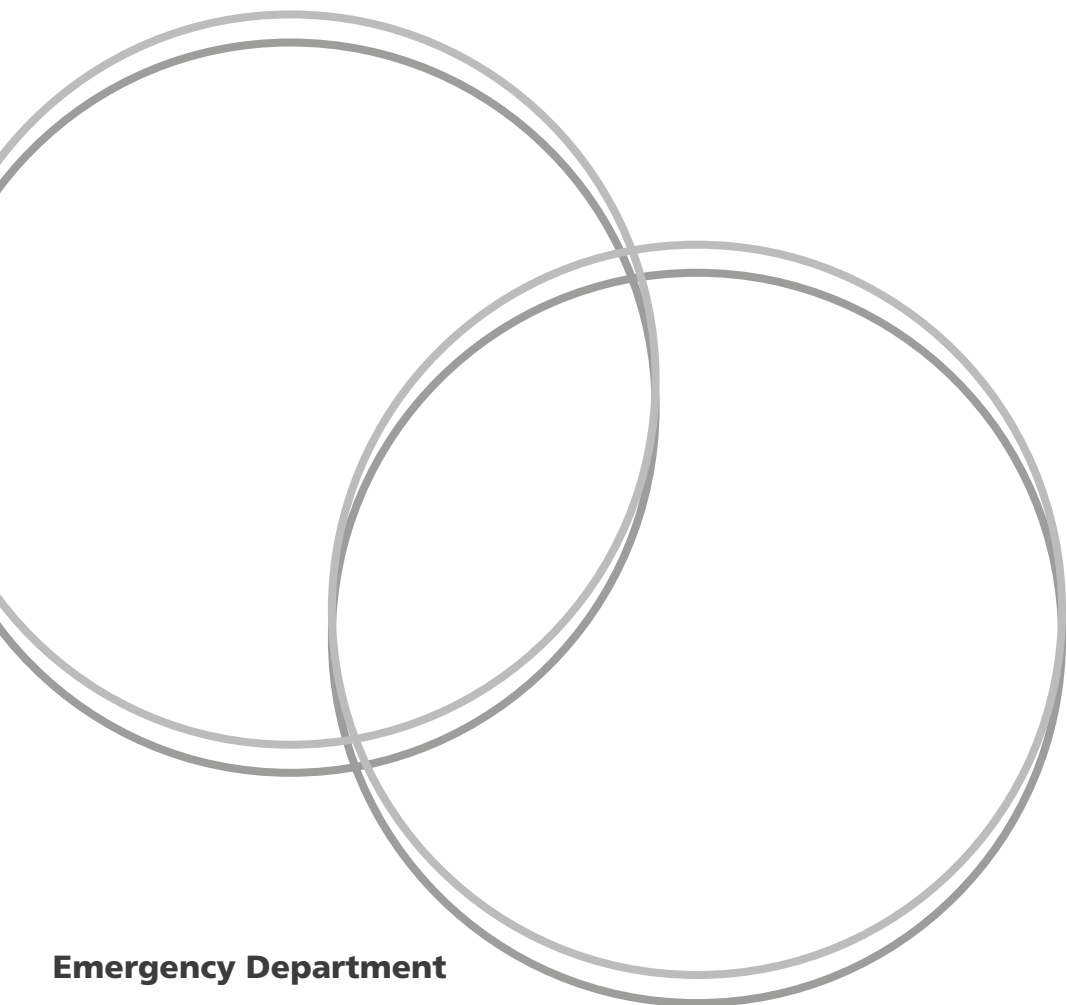




Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Using Elbow Crutches

Information for patients



Emergency Department

Using elbow crutches will help you to get around during your recovery. It will take a little bit of time to get used to using the crutches, so don't be worried if it feels difficult at the beginning. The medical professional that you see will tell you how much weight you can put through your affected leg and which of the techniques below you should use to move around.

There are a few different ways to use elbow crutches, but remember that the crutches will remain with your affected leg at all times.

Non-weight bearing

This means that you should not put any weight on your affected leg.

- Keep your affected leg off the ground by holding your knee slightly bent.
- Place both of your crutches one step in front of you, level with each other.
- Move your body forwards between the crutches, supporting your body weight through your hands and good leg, to bring your body level with the crutches once again.



Partial or full weight bearing

This means that you can put some weight on your affected leg; as your pain allows. Try to walk as normally as possible with your whole foot touching the floor.

- Place both of your crutches one step in front of you, level with each other.
- Put your injured leg on the ground, slightly behind the crutches.
- Step through with your unaffected leg while taking some of your weight through your hands and some through your injured leg.



Standing and sitting

- To stand up with the crutches, it is important that you do not put your hands inside the grey cuff part until you are fully standing. This may cause you to injure your elbow or shoulder. Instead, put one hand on both crutch handles (making an 'H' shape with the hand grips) and one hand on the arm of the chair/bed that you are standing from. Push yourself up to stand.
- Once you are standing you can place your hands inside the grey cuff.
- When you come to sit down again, remember to remove your arms from the cuff before sitting. Make sure that the chair or place you want to sit is lined up right behind you. Put both of the crutches together to make the 'H' shape to support you as you sit. Slowly lower yourself onto the seat.



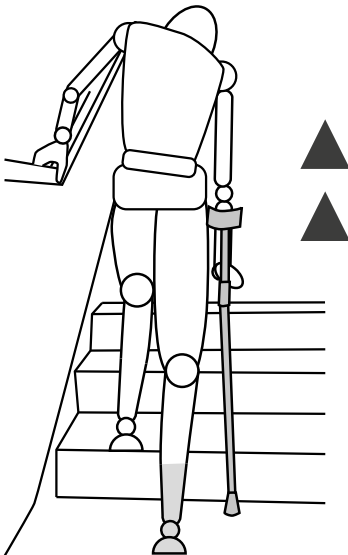
Making the 'H' shape with the hand grips on your crutches

Stairs

If you feel unsteady or unsafe, it is safer to go up and down stairs on your bottom.

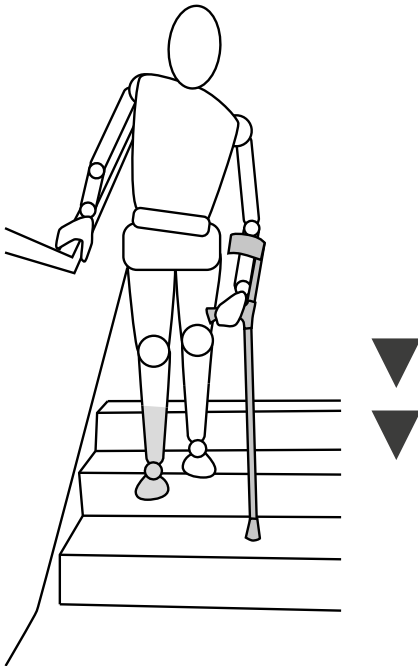
Going up

- Stand close to the handrail and hold on with one hand. Hold on to both of the crutches in your other hand. To do this, keep your arm in the grey cuff of the crutch supporting you on the other side to the handrail. Turn the spare crutch so it is horizontal then hold it in the centre at the same time as holding the hand grip of the supporting crutch.
- If there is no handrail available, keep your crutches with one on either side of your body.
- Step up with your good leg first, supporting your affected leg with the handrail and supporting crutch. Lift up your injured leg and then the crutches. Place your supporting crutch safely on the next step so that it can't slip back off the edge.



Going down

- Stand close to the handrail and hold on with one hand. Hold on to both crutches in your other hand, as when going up.
- If there is no handrail, continue to use both of your crutches, with one on either side of your body.
- Put the supporting crutch down first, supporting your affected leg with the handrail and supporting crutch (or both crutches if there is no handrail), then your injured leg and then your good leg.



Useful Information

If you have any questions or concerns please contact your GP or **NHS 111** (dial 111 (freephone) from any landline or mobile).

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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