

Crutching Technique After Surgery

Twin Cities Orthopedics – Complex Knee Injury Clinic

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Language

- BW (Body Weight)
- NWB (Non-Weight bearing)
 - NO body weight should go through the involved/surgical limb
- PWB (Partial Weight Bearing)
 - It is safe to place a portion of your body weight through the involved/surgical limb
- FWB (Full Weight Bearing) or WBAT (Weight Bearing as Tolerated)
 - It is safe to place full body weight through the involved/surgical limb, but you may initially elect to put less weight through the limb due to pain or weakness
- Transfer
 - Moving from one position to another (example: moving from sitting in a chair to the standing position)

Tips + Tricks

- If you are “full weight bearing” (FWB) or “weight bearing as tolerated” (WBAT) you may follow the instructions for “partial weight bearing” (PWB) in this document. There will be no maximum limit on the amount of weight you can safely put through your surgical limb with the crutching techniques if the medical team has allowed FWB or WBAT status.
 - However, you may not be comfortable or confident putting a significant amount of weight through your surgical limb in the initial days following surgery. It is ok to off-load your limb with your crutches and gradually increase the load as you become more comfortable.
- If you are “partial weight bearing” (PWB), with a specific percentage of your body weight used to define a limit (ex: 40% BW), it can be helpful to use a bathroom scale to practice staying within that limit. Stand with your crutches with the foot of your surgical leg on the scale and repeatedly shift onto the surgical limb over the scale up to the max allowed weight limit. Stay within this limit with crutching.



Crutch Fitting

Crutch Height:

Adjust so the pad is 2 finger widths below the armpit



Hand Support:

Aligns with the crease of the wrist when the arm is hanging relaxed



Final Fit:

Elbows are slightly bent when the hands are grasping the supports



Transferring from Sit to Stand

Sit to Stand Transfer - Chair With Arms

1. Move to the front edge of the chair.
2. Place the crutches together and hold the hand grip with one hand.
3. Place your other hand on the arm of the chair for a stable push-off point.
4. Lean forward to push up using only your non-surgical leg and your hand at the arm of the chair.



Watch Video:

<https://vimeo.com/761568718>

Transferring from Sit to Stand

Sit to Stand Transfer - Chair Without Arms

1. Move to the front edge of the chair.
2. Place the crutches together and hold the hand grip with one hand.
3. Place your other hand on the arm of the seat of the bench/chair for a stable push-off point.
4. Lean forward to push up using only your non-surgical leg and your hand at the seat of the bench/chair.



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Instructions for the Restriction of Non-Weight Bearing (NWB)



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Walking: Non-Weight Bearing (NWB)

1. Stand on your non-surgical leg and move both crutches slightly out to the front.
2. Lean your body weight forward over the crutches (keep your shoulder and trunk muscles strong) and swing forward, keeping your surgical foot off the floor, then place your non-surgical foot back on the floor in line with or just in front of the crutches.
3. Repeat in this fashion.
4. Have a family member walk near you and move slowly with small crutching steps when first learning.
5. It is helpful to practice this technique BEFORE surgery.



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<https://vimeo.com/761569126>



Watch Video:

<https://vimeo.com/761569294>

Going Up Stairs: Non-Weight Bearing (NWB) with 2 Crutches

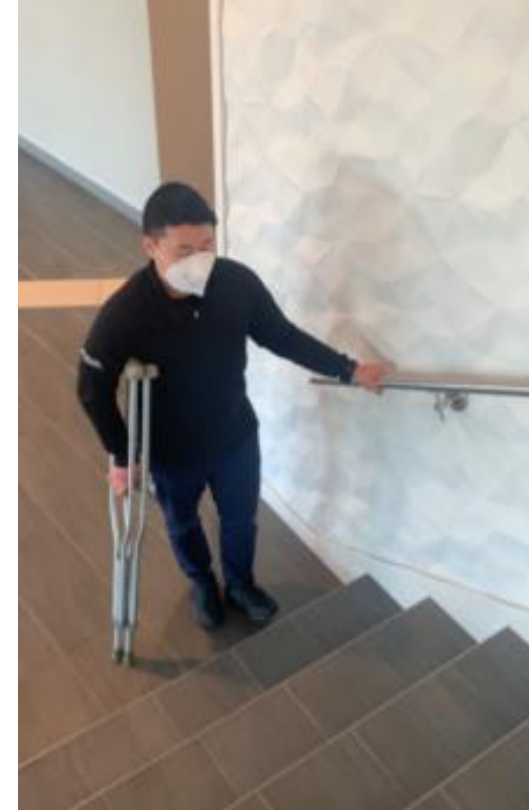
1. Stand on your non-surgical leg at the bottom of the first step with your crutches.
2. Support your weight through the crutches (keep your shoulder and trunk muscles strong) as you lift your non-surgical foot up to the first step (do NOT put your surgical foot down on the floor).
3. Once your non-surgical foot is securely up on the first step, press through this leg to raise yourself up the step, bringing your surgical limb and crutches up with you.
4. Repeat for each step in this fashion, leading with your non-surgical leg.
5. Have a caregiver stand behind you when you are first learning.
6. It is helpful to practice this technique BEFORE surgery.



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<https://vimeo.com/761569404>

Going Up Stairs: Non-Weight Bearing (NWB) with Crutches and a Handrail

1. Stand on your non-surgical leg at the bottom of the first step, hold both crutches under one arm and grasp the handrail with the other hand.
2. Support your weight through the crutches and the handrail (keep your shoulder and trunk muscles strong) as you lift your non-surgical foot up to the first step (do NOT put your surgical foot down on the floor).
3. Once your non-surgical foot is securely up on the first step, press through this leg to raise yourself up the step, bringing your surgical limb and crutches up with you.
4. Repeat for each step in this fashion, leading with your non-surgical leg.
5. Have a caregiver stand behind you when you are first learning.
6. It is helpful to practice this technique BEFORE surgery.

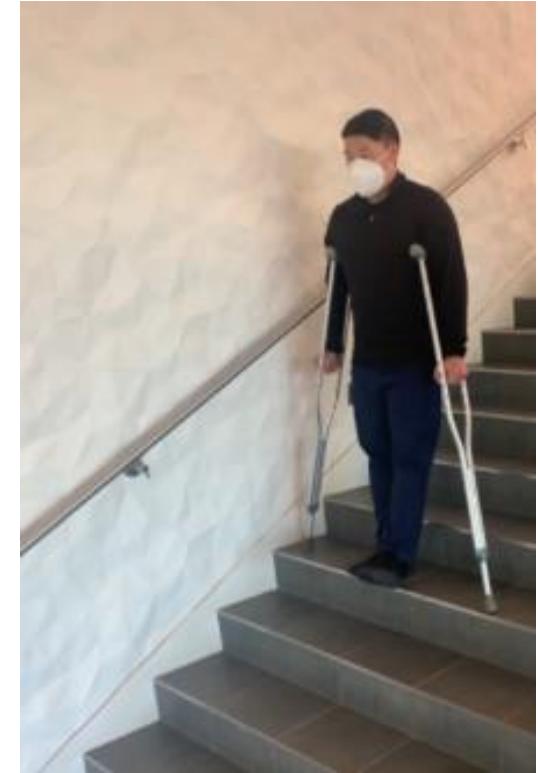


Watch Video:

<https://vimeo.com/761569809>

Going Down Stairs: Non-Weight Bearing (NWB) with 2 Crutches

1. Stand on your non-surgical leg, with support from your crutches, above the first step.
2. Place both crutches securely on the step down in front of you.
3. Slowly shift your weight over your crutches (keep your shoulder and trunk muscles strong) and lower the foot of your non-surgical leg down to that same step (keep your surgical foot off the floor).
4. Assure your balance is stable and then advance your crutches down to the next step and repeat.
5. Have a caregiver stand in front of you when you are first learning.
6. It is helpful to practice this technique BEFORE surgery.



Watch Video:

<https://vimeo.com/761569936>

Going Down Stairs: Non-Weight Bearing (NWB) with Crutches and a Handrail

1. Stand on your non-surgical leg, with support from your crutches, above the first step. Place both crutches under one arm and firmly grasp the handrail with the other hand.
2. Place the crutches securely on the step down in front of you and maintain a strong grasp on the rail with your hand.
3. Slowly shift your weight forward over your crutches and the rail (keep your shoulder and trunk muscles strong) and lower the foot of your non-surgical leg down to the step (keep your surgical foot off the floor).
4. Assure your balance is stable and then advance your crutches down to the next step and repeat.
5. Have a caregiver stand in front of you when you are first learning.
6. It is helpful to practice this technique BEFORE surgery.



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Instructions for the Restriction of Partial Weight Bearing (PWB)



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Walking: Partial-Weight Bearing (PWB)

1. Stand on your non-surgical leg and move both crutches slightly out to the front.
2. Step your surgical foot onto the floor directly between the crutches then step forward with the non-surgical leg, using the crutches to support a portion of your body weight (off-loading your surgical leg).
3. Repeat in this fashion.
4. Have a family member walk near you and move slowly with small crutching steps when first learning.
5. It is helpful to practice this technique BEFORE surgery.



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Watch Video:
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Going Up Stairs: Partial Weight-Bearing (PWB) with 2 Crutches

1. Stand with your crutches at the bottom of the first step with most of your body weight on your non-surgical leg (light weight through your surgical leg).
2. Support your weight through the crutches (keep your shoulder and trunk muscles strong) and your surgical leg (lightly) as you lift your non-surgical foot up to the first step.
3. Once your non-surgical foot is securely up on the first step, press through this leg to raise yourself up the step, bringing your surgical limb and crutches up with you.
4. Repeat for each step in this fashion, leading with your non-surgical leg.
5. Have a caregiver stand behind you when you are first learning.
6. It is helpful to practice this technique BEFORE surgery.

Do not put more weight through your surgical limb than allowed with your specific post-operative precautions



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<https://vimeo.com/761506574>

Going Up Stairs: Partial-Weight Bearing (PWB) with Crutches and a Handrail

1. Stand at the bottom of the first step with most of your body weight on your non-surgical leg, with your crutches under one arm and grasping the handrail with the other hand.
2. Support your weight through the crutches and the handrail (keep your shoulder and trunk muscles strong) and your surgical leg (lightly) as you lift your non-surgical foot up to the first step.
3. Once your non-surgical foot is securely up on the first step, press through this leg and the handrail to raise yourself up the step, bringing your surgical limb and crutches up with you.
4. Repeat for each step in this fashion, leading with your non-surgical leg.
5. Have a caregiver stand behind you when you are first learning.
6. It is helpful to practice this technique BEFORE surgery.

Do not put more weight through your surgical limb than allowed with your specific post-operative precautions



Watch Video:
<https://vimeo.com/761506738>

Going Down Stairs: Partial-Weight Bearing (PWB) with 2 Crutches

1. Stand above the first step with most of your body weight on your non-surgical leg, with support from your crutches.
2. Place both crutches securely on the step down in front of you.
3. Slowly shift your weight over your crutches (keep your shoulder and trunk muscles strong) and lower the foot of your surgical leg down to that same step, allowing light pressure through your surgical limb, as you then lower your non-surgical limb down to the same step.
4. Assure your balance is stable and then advance your crutches down to the next step and repeat.
5. Have a caregiver stand in front of you when you are first learning.
6. It is helpful to practice this technique BEFORE surgery.

Do not put more weight through your surgical limb than allowed with your specific post-operative precautions



Watch Video:
<https://vimeo.com/761506185>

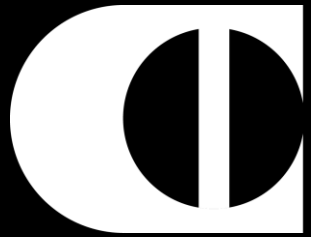
Going Down Stairs: Partial-Weight Bearing (PWB) with Crutches and a Handrail

1. Stand above the first step with most of your body weight on your non-surgical leg and support from your crutches under one arm and the handrail at the other arm.
2. Place the crutches securely down on the step in front of you.
3. Slowly shift your weight over your crutches and the handrail (keep your shoulder and trunk muscles strong) and lower the foot of your surgical leg down to that same step, allowing light pressure through your surgical limb, as you then lower your non-surgical limb down to the same step.
4. Assure your balance is stable and then advance your crutches down to the next step and repeat.
5. Have a caregiver stand in front of you when you are first learning.
6. It is helpful to practice this technique BEFORE surgery.

Do not put more weight through your surgical limb than allowed with your specific post-operative precautions



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