

Using Crutches: Up and Down Steps

When climbing up and down steps, remember this rule: Up with the good (unaffected leg) and down with the bad (affected leg). Note: If you're supposed to keep all weight off your leg (non-weight-bearing), ask your healthcare provider for special instructions.

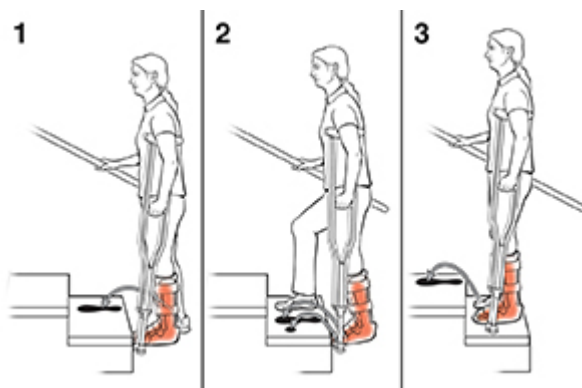
Tip: Ask a friend to carry 1 of your crutches while you go up or down stairs.

Take care when using stairs

- Always use an elevator if available.
- Have someone guard you as you learn to use stairs. A guard stands below you. They hold your belt (or a special "gait belt" you can borrow or buy) to help you if you lose your balance.
- When there is no handrail, keep 1 crutch under each arm. Follow the instructions above.
- If the stairs are slippery or steep, it may be safer to lift or lower yourself from step to step while sitting. Hold both your crutches in 1 hand as you do so.

Up stairs

- Hold the handrail with 1 hand.
- If a friend is not available to carry 1 of the crutches, put both crutches in your other hand.
- Support your weight evenly between the handrail and your crutches.
- Put some weight on the crutches.
- Step up with your unaffected foot.
- Get your balance.
- Straighten your unaffected knee and lift your body weight.
- Bring your crutches and affected leg up.



Down stairs

- Hold the handrail with 1 hand.
- If a friend is not available to carry 1 of the crutches, put both crutches in your other hand.
- Bend your unaffected knee, moving your crutches and affected leg down.
- Support your weight evenly between the handrail and your crutches.
- Slowly bring your unaffected leg down.
- Don't hop.

