

# How to use elbow crutches on stairs with a rail

This leaflet aims to guide you on how to use elbow crutches on the stairs. If you have any further questions, please speak to a physiotherapist caring for you.

## Going up stairs

1. Remove the crutch nearest to the handrail/banister and place it on the outside in the opposite hand. You should grasp it between your forefingers so that the two crutches form a 'T' shape, or get someone to carry it up the stairs for you.



2. Lift your unaffected leg up first, then your operated leg and finally your crutch. Take one step at a time.



3. Once you are at the top of the stairs make sure you are a good distance away from the edge. Then remove the crutch that you are carrying between your fingers and place it back in the hand that was on the rail/banister.

## Going down stairs

1. Remove the crutch nearest to the handrail/banister and place it on the outside in the opposite hand. You should grasp it between your forefingers so that the two crutches form a 'T' shape, or get someone to carry it down the stairs for you.
2. Put your crutch down first, then your operated leg and finally your unaffected leg. Take one step at a time.



**Remember the rule – Good leg up and bad leg down. This will help you to recall which leg to move first when going up and down stairs.**

## What should I do if I have a problem?

If you have any problems with your elbow crutches whilst you are on the ward, please contact the physiotherapist caring for you. The nursing staff will be able to help you do this.

If you have any problems with your elbow crutches once you have left the hospital, please contact the physiotherapy department for further advice (see below for contact details).

### **Safety checks you should complete regularly:**

- Check the rubber ends on your crutches regularly. If they are wearing smooth, consult the physiotherapy department at the hospital.
- Check that both gold buttons on your crutches (that adjust the height of the crutch) are sticking firmly out of the metal. If any of the buttons are pushed in, consult the physiotherapy department at the hospital.

### **Contact us**

If you have any questions or concerns about your elbow crutches, please contact the relevant physiotherapy department at the hospital where your crutches were issued:

**Physiotherapy at St Thomas' Hospital:** 020 7188 5094 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

**Physiotherapy at Guy's Hospital:** 020 7188 5103 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets)**

**Pharmacy Medicines Helpline**

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

**t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

**Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

**t:** 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas'    **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's    **e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

**Language Support Services**

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

**t:** 020 7188 8815    **fax:** 020 7188 5953

**NHS 111**

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

**t:** 111

**NHS Choices**

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

**w:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**Become a member of your local hospitals, and help shape our future**

Membership is free and it is completely up to you how much you get involved. To become a member of our Foundation Trust, you need to be 18 years of age or over, live in Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham, Wandsworth or Westminster or have been a patient at either hospital in the last five years. To join:

**t:** 0848 143 4017    **e:** [members@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:members@gstt.nhs.uk)

**w:** [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk)

**Leaflet number: 3369/VER2**

Date published: March 2014

Review date: March 2017

© 2014 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust