

How to Use Stairs with a Crutch or Cane

Using walking aids safely

This handout explains how to go up and down stairs safely using a crutch or cane. In this handout, the non-surgical leg is called the “good” leg.

Railings

If possible, use a hand rail on the opposite side of the surgical leg. If there is no railing and you are using 2 crutches, the sequence is the same as described below. Move both crutches together at the same time.

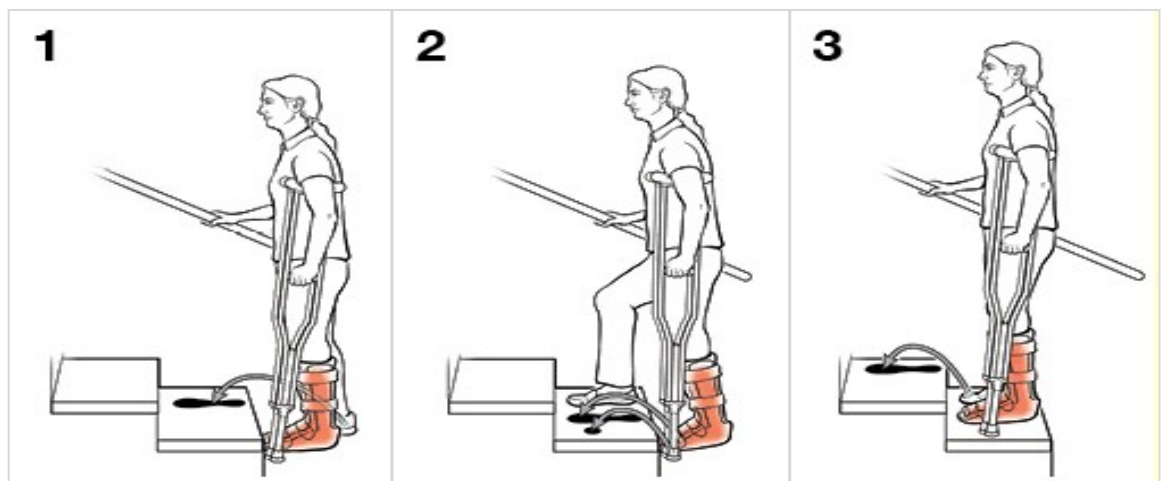
Using Help

If someone is guarding you:

- Have them stand behind you when you go UP.
- Have them stand in front of you when you go DOWN.

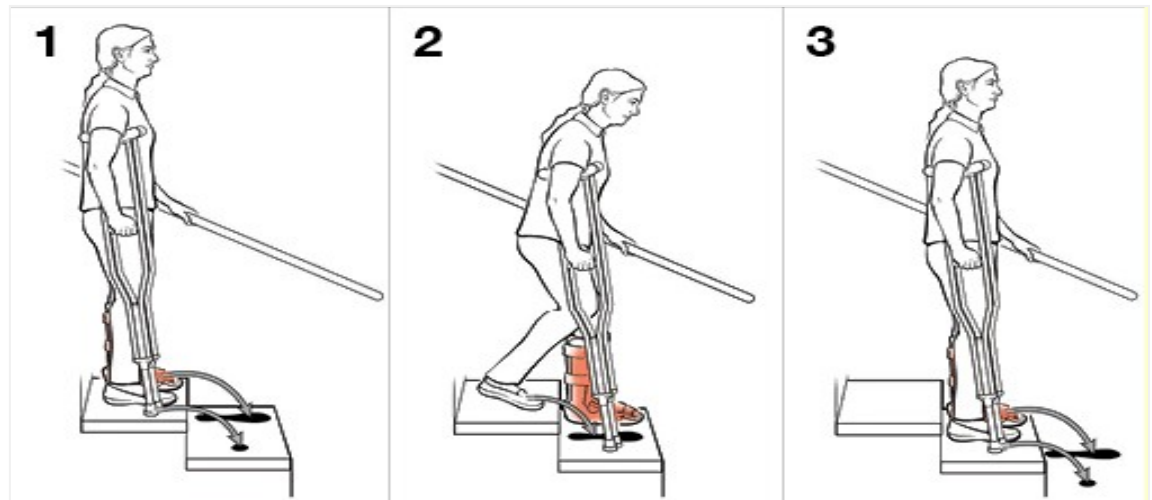
To go UP:

- Hold railing with the hand opposite the crutch or cane.
- Keep the crutch or cane on the ground with your surgical leg.
- Transfer your weight to your arms and the crutch or cane. Step up with your “good” leg.
- Lean forward. Push onto your “good” leg.
- Lift your surgical leg and crutch or cane onto the same step.



To go DOWN:

- Drop the crutch or cane down one step.
- Lower your **surgical leg** to the step. Keep your body weight on your arms. Keep your back upright.
- Bring your “good” leg down to the same step.



Images from © 2000-2020 The StayWell Company, LLC, 800 Township Line Road, Yardley, PA 19067. All rights reserved. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your healthcare professional's instructions.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Hip and Knee Center at UWMC - Northwest: Call 206.668.6360

For urgent needs when the clinic is closed: Call 206.598.6190 and ask to page the Orthopedic resident on call.