YOUR CHOICE. THE TRUSTED CHOICE.

GAIT TRAINING

USING CRUTCHES SAFELY
GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR CRUTCHES

Moving around with crutches takes time and practice. Don’t push yourself too quickly or try something unsafe.

Check with your doctor or nurse to make sure:

• You know how much weight (if any) you can place on your injured/healing leg; following the weight guideline will help you heal.

• Your crutches are correctly adjusted to your height.

Contact your doctor if you feel numbness in your arm, hands or fingers.

SAFETY FIRST!

Keep your crutches clean and in shape for safe walking. Never use crutches for anything other than their intended use.

Always:

• Check the tips of the crutches and remove dirt, snow or water.

• Check to make sure crutch screws are tight.

Never walk with crutches if:

• You feel dizzy, faint or are about to fall.

• The crutch tips are worn or missing.
STANDING UP WITH CRUTCHES

• Slide your hips forward to the edge of the chair, bed or toilet seat.
• Keep your injured/healing leg straight and your healthy leg beneath you.
• Place both crutches in the hand of your injured/healing side, palm down.
• Your injured/healing leg should remain in front of you, bearing no weight.
• Once standing, reach with your free hand for the other crutch and place both crutches under your armpits with your hands firmly grasping the handgrips.
WALKING WITH CRUTCHES

- At the same time advance both crutches approximately one foot ahead while balancing your weight on your healthy leg.
- Step forward with your injured/healing leg.
- Step forward with your healthy leg, bringing it through the crutches and past the injured/healing leg.
- Move crutches forward to balance yourself.
- Remember to keep your weight on your hands, not your armpits.
- Keep in mind your crutches take up room on the sides and can get caught on things, so keep a wide space around you.
- Look ahead to where you are walking; don't look at your feet.
CLIMBING STAIRS WITH ONE CRUTCH

• **Ascending:** Walk up the stairs with one crutch if you have a sturdy handrail on one side.

  *Keep one crutch under your arm (opposite side of handrail) while placing the other crutch sideways in the opposite hand.*

  *Lift your healthy leg up to the next step, followed by the injured/healing leg, then the crutches.*

• **Descending:** Walk down the stairs with one crutch if you have a sturdy handrail on one side.

  *Lead with the crutch first, followed by the injured/healing leg.*

  *Then lower your healthy leg.*
CLIMBING STAIRS WITH BOTH CRUTCHES

• Do not walk up or down stairs with crutches if you are dizzy or lightheaded or if any steps are wet, icy or snowy.

• In case of emergency, sit down on the step and slide up or down on your bottom, then stand up once you have completed your climb or descent.

• The phrase “up with the good, down with the bad” can be used to help you recall which leg to lead with while climbing stairs.

• **Ascending:** Walk up to the bottom step as closely as possible.

  While putting downward pressure on the crutches with your hands on the handgrips, lift your healthy leg up (“up with the good”) to the first step.

  Follow with the injured/healing leg, followed by the crutches.
• **Descending:** Bring your feet as close to the edge of the step as possible.

Lower both crutches to the next step down and then lower your injured/healing leg (“down with the bad”) to the next step without putting pressure on the leg.

Lower your hips while putting pressure on the crutches with your arms.

Lower your healthy leg down to the next step.
**HERE TO HELP**

Our team wants you to heal quickly and safely! If you have any questions about using or maintaining crutches, please contact your doctor or nurse.

**Scott & White**
2401 S. 31st Street
Temple, TX 76508
sw.org

Scott & White accepts all major health insurance plans.

---

**About Scott & White**

Along with its 636-bed flagship hospital and clinic facility in Temple, Texas, Scott & White includes nine hospitals or hospital partners, and over 60 clinic locations throughout Central Texas. With more than 800 physicians and scientists, Scott & White has become one of the nation’s largest multispecialty group practice systems.