

CRUTCHES

Verify correct fit of crutches: approximately 3 finger widths between the axilla and top of the crutch

Position crutches on the unaffected side when sitting or rising from a chair

Position hands on hand grips w/ elbows flexed at 30 degrees

Do NOT bear weight on axilla

CRUTCHES: NON-WEIGHT-BEARING

Beginning in the tripod position, maintain weight on the "unaffected" (weight-bearing) extremity

Advance both crutches and the affected extremity

Move the unaffected weight bearing foot/leg forward (beyond the crutches)

Advance both crutches, and then the affected extremity

CRUTCHES: WEIGHT-BEARING

Move crutches forward about one step's length

Move affected leg forward, level w/ the crutch tips

Move the unaffected leg forward

CRUTCHES: WALKING UP STAIRS

Hold onto rail w/ one hand, and crutches w/ the other hand

Push down on the stair rail and the crutches, and step up w/ the unaffected leg

If not allowed to place weight on the affected leg, hop up w/ the unaffected leg

Bring the affected leg and the crutches up beside the unaffected leg

Remember that the unaffected leg goes up first and the crutches move with the affected leg

CRUTCHES: WALKING DOWN STAIRS

Place the affected leg and the crutches down on the step below

Support weight by leaning on the crutches and the stair rail

Bring the unaffected leg down

Remember that the affected leg goes down first and the crutches move with the affected leg

CANE

Cane is used on the unaffected side

Move the cane forward 6 to 10 inches

Then, move the weaker leg forward

Finally, advance the stronger leg past the cane

For correct size, have pt wear shoes.

The length is measured from the greater trochanter to the floor.

Another method of cane walking includes having the pt move the affected extremity and cane at the same time.

WALKER

For correct size, have the pt wear shoes

The pt's wrists are even w/ the hand flips on the walker when arms are dangling downward

Advance the walker approximately 12 inches

Advance w/ the affected lower limb

Move unaffected limb forward

Identify appropriateness of a rolling walker if a walker is being used for support due to overall weakness.

A rolling walker isn't appropriate for a pt who has Parkinson's disease due to shuffling gait.

