

UNDERARM CRUTCHES

Provide physically impaired or unsteady patients with safety, exceptional stability, and confidence during ambulation.

FITTING:

1. Make certain patient is standing as naturally upright as possible, on a firm, flat surface. They should be wearing the same style shoes they wear during activities of daily living.
2. Adjust the overall length of the crutch by measuring 2" out to the side of the shoe at toe level, and then 6" straight forward. Mark this spot.
3. Measure from the underarm to the marked spot and subtract 2". This measurement gives the required crutch length adjustable by raising or lowering the center post.
4. To adjust handgrips, measure from the underarm to the base of the thumb and deduct 2". This will put approximately a 30 degree bend at the elbow when the crutches are in position for use. Weight is always borne on the handgrips and not the underarm supports.
5. When all adjustments are made, tighten adjusting bolts securely. The patient should be able to lean forward slightly, resting on the underarm supports of the crutch with the bottom of the crutches slightly in front of the feet.

CAUTION:

- Check tightness of wing nuts on adjusting bolts periodically.
- Check the security of the crutch tips.
- Use care when walking on wet or slippery surfaces.
- Ask your physician or therapist to show you the proper walking gait.



SAFETY: Use extra caution for mobility risks and risks of falling, including:

- A. **Poor Lighting:** Use of nightlights, flashlight by bedside, lamps or light switch that can easily be reached.
- B. **Poor Walk Spaces:** Fix loose floorboards, paint uneven floors, use wet floor signs, keep snow and ice cleared from entrances, ensure carpet is firmly attached to stairs, do not walk in stocking feet, and remove loose rugs, clutter, cords, and excess oxygen tubing (when applicable).
- C. **Equipment:** Replace worn or cracked walkers, crutches and cane tips; use colored oxygen tubing on light carpet; tighten loose handrails.
- D. **Bathroom:** Install grab bars, use bath mats with suction cups, and use elevated toilet seat.
- E. **Medications:** Be aware of medications that may cause dizziness, drowsiness, and unsteadiness.

MAINTENANCE:

Your crutches, if maintained properly, can last for many years. The rubber tips are there to provide traction on walking surfaces. These tips must always be in good working condition. The handgrips are there to provide better gripping of the crutch and to provide cushioning. These should also be changed immediately when they are cracked or become uncomfortable to grasp. The underarm pads also are there to provide comfort and to help prevent any nerve damage. Replace them when they become split or uncomfortable.