

How to Use a Walker

Fitting a Walker



1. Put on the shoes you'll be wearing when you use the walker.
2. Stand up straight.
3. Put the walker in front of, and partially around, you.
4. Put both hands on the handgrips of the walker.

Your elbows should be slightly bent and the hand grip should be at wrist level when your arm is hanging by your side. Adjust the height of the walker if the hand grips aren't at wrist level.

Your weight bearing order is:

Non Weight Bearing	No body weight on your injured leg. Keep your injured leg off the floor at all times.
Feather Weight Bearing	Able to touch your toe down to floor, for balance only. Don't put any weight on the injured leg. Imagine having an egg under your foot that you don't want to crush.
Partial Weight Bearing	Able to put up to half of your weight through your injured leg.
Weight Bearing as Tolerated	Can take most or all of your weight through your injured leg, as pain or strength allows.
Full Weight Bearing	Able to take full weight through your injured leg.

Use the method you were shown with the instructions below.

Walking



1. Stand the walker in front of and a little bit around you.
2. Move the walker one step length ahead of you. Put all four legs of the walker on the floor.
3. Move the injured leg forward then push down on the walker using your arms.
4. Move your good leg forward, even with or slightly ahead of the sore/injured leg.
5. Keep at least 15 to 20 cm (6 to 8 inches) between you and the front of the walker.
6. Repeat these steps to keep walking—walker, injured leg, good leg.

Sitting/Standing



1. Stand with your back to the chair and with the walker close to you.
2. Put the back of your good leg against the chair.
3. Slide your injured leg slightly forward.
4. Put both hands on the armrests or seat of the chair.
5. Lower yourself gently onto the chair.
6. Move back in the chair if you need to.
7. Reverse the procedure to stand.

Note: Don't sit on unstable or very low chairs.

Curb Step with a Walker

1. Walk as close as you can to the curb step.

2. When your balance is ready, lift the walker up onto the step.
3. Step up on to the curb putting your good leg up first.
4. Bring up your injured leg.
5. To step down, put the walker down to the next level. Put your injured leg forward or down first, then step down with your good leg.

Note: Never use your walker to go up or down more than a single step.

Safety Tips

- Always wear supportive shoes instead of slippers.
- Check that the rubber tips of the walker aren't worn. Replace them if needed.
- Don't put the walker too far ahead of you when walking. A good rule is to have the walker no more than one step length in front of you.
- Don't step too far into the walker when walking. This may cause you to lose your balance.
- Don't lean or pull on the walker when getting up or sitting down. This could tip the walker over.
- Watch for wet surfaces. Use small steps if you must walk on a wet or slippery surface.
- Remove loose mats and rugs, electric cords and cables. These could cause you to trip or slip.
- Don't use your walker on stairs.

Your doctor or physiotherapist will tell you when you can stop using your walker.

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information call Health Link at 811.

Current as of: September 4, 2018

Author: Allied Health (Physiotherapy), Alberta Health Services (www.myhealth.alberta.ca)