

Hints and tips on using walking sticks

- > If you are planning on using two walking sticks at the same time please seek further advice for the correct technique or to see if this is actually the best option for you. You can contact your local Occupational Therapists or Physiotherapists via your GP or at a local Independent Living Centre.
- > If using the walking stick causes any pain or aggravates an existing condition please seek medical advice.
- > If you have lost confidence in walking, but now have a stick to assist you, you can build up your exercise tolerance by slowly and gradually increasing the distance that you walk. Having someone with you initially may help to increase your confidence, or strength.
- > Make sure that any corridors, doorways or spaces between furniture are wide enough for you and your stick to fit through safely.
- > Clear any clutter off your floor and away from doorways to keep walkways free from obstructions to prevent tripping or tumbles.
- > Take away any loose mats and rugs, as you can catch your foot on an edge and trip up. If you have frayed carpets we suggest that you tape them down securely with carpet/gaffer tape.
- > Keep the ferrule on your stick in a good condition and replace regularly when the tread has started to wear down, this will mean that the stick will be less likely to slip.

- > Sometimes people have other daily activities that they find difficult as well as walking around. If this is your situation you may find it helpful to either self-assess online for other areas of difficulty or visit your local Independent Living Centre. Alternatively, you can contact your local social services Occupational Therapy department and request an assessment.

Walking with a stick

Hold the walking stick in the opposite hand to your bad/affected leg. Put the stick on the ground as you put your bad leg forward and down on the ground. The stick will then help to support the bad leg. Once you have stepped your good leg forward then lift the stick off the ground. Repeat this action. Sticks should be used with the handle facing backwards. One finger down the front of a rounded stick will increase the stability of the wrist when using the stick.

Chairs

- > When getting up, the stick should be near the arm of the chair. Move to the front of the chair with one foot slightly in front of the other. Lean your upper body forward and with your hands on the chair arms, push up and stand up. Steady yourself, reach for your stick and then you are ready to go.
- > When sitting down, go to the chair, turn around, feel the chair behind one leg, rest the stick in a convenient place, place your hands on the

chair arms, bend forwards and gently lower pushing your hips well back into the chair.

Stairs

- > Hold onto a handrail if possible. The stick goes on the same step as the bad/affected leg. The strong leg should lead going up the stairs and the affected leg should lead coming down the stairs.
- > If you are having difficulty climbing the stairs then please complete the assessment "I have difficulty getting up and down my stairs" which can be found in the stairs area on this site.

How to measure for a walking stick

It is important that your walking stick is the correct length for you. When the stick is the correct length, the user should be able to maintain an upright position with the elbow slightly bent (approximately 30° angle). You will need someone to help you to check that the length is correct.

Adjusting the length of a stick

- > Remove the rubber end cap
- > Turn the stick upside down and place the handle on the floor
- > Hold your arm by the side of your body in a slight bent position at the elbow
- > Get your helper to mark the stick at the level of the crease at the front of your wrist joint

- > Cut off the excess length of stick and replace the ferrule. It is important to fit the correct size of ferrule to the end.
- > Adjustable height sticks can just be set to the correct height.