How to Use a Walker

Fitting a walker

Stand up straight. The top of the walker should be level with your wrist when your arms are resting by your sides.

When you hold your walker, your elbows should bend 20 to 25 degrees.

Standing
Walking

Keep both hands on the walker while you are walking. Before you take a step, make sure all four legs of the walker are on the floor.

**Non-weight bearing:** Hold the *bad* leg up off the ground. Move the walker forward. Step forward on the *good* leg.

**Toe-touch weight bearing:** Move the walker forward. Then, bring the *bad* leg forward and let your toes rest lightly on the floor. Step forward with the *good* leg, putting most of your weight through your arms.

**Partial weight bearing (_______% weight):** Move the walker forward. Step forward with the *bad* leg, but limit the weight you place on it. Then, step forward with the *good* leg, putting most of your weight through the arms.

**Weight bearing as tolerated (as much weight as you can handle):** Move the walker forward. Next, step forward with the *bad* leg—put as much weight on it as you can handle. Then, step forward with the *good* leg.

Sitting down and standing up

**To sit:** Back up to a sturdy chair or bed. You should feel it behind you. Put your *bad* leg in front of you. Slowly lower yourself and reach for the chair or bed.

**To get up:** Push up from the chair or bed. Once you are standing, grab the walker. Don’t use the walker to pull yourself up.
Using the stairs

If this method doesn't work for you, your therapist may show you another way to go up and down the stairs.

**Going up the stairs:**

- If there is a railing, place one hand on it.
- Turn the walker sideways beside you (opposite the railing). Place two of the legs of the walker on the first step and two on the level where you are standing.
- Hold the hand-grip of the walker on the side that is on the higher step. As you press down on the walker (and railing), step up with your good leg.
- Move your bad leg up to the same step. (If you cannot put weight on that leg, bend at the knee to keep the foot off the ground.)
- Raise the walker up one step, and repeat the process: good leg first, then bad leg.

**Going down the stairs:**

- Place one hand on the railing.
- Turn the walker sideways beside you (opposite the railing). Place two of the legs of the walker on the top step with you. Two of the legs should be down one step.
- Hold the hand-grip of the walker on the side that is on the higher step.
- Put your weight on the railing and walker. Step down with your bad leg. Then, move your good leg down to the same step. (If you cannot put weight on your bad leg, hold your foot off the ground in front of you. Step down with your good leg.)
- Lower the walker one step. Repeat the process, bad leg first, then good leg.

**Remember:** Up with the good, down with the bad.

*Going up:*

Lead with your good leg

*Going down:*

Lead with your bad leg
Tips

• Use the railing, if there is one.

• For ramps, take small steps.

• For curbs, use the same method as for the stairs—up with the *good* and down with the *bad*. Keep your feet as close to the curb as you can. Place the walker all the way up or down from the curb. (If needed, your therapist may show you another way to go up and down curbs.)

• Be careful when walking across one surface type to another (for example, from carpet to tile).

• Remove scatter rugs, electric cords and anything that may cause you to fall.

• In the bathroom, use a raised toilet seat, a tub seat, grab bars and non-slip bath mats.

• Clean up spills right away.

• Arrange your house to keep the items you need handy.

• Use a backpack, fanny pack, apron or briefcase to carry things around.

• Check the tips of your walker often for wear and tear.