

## **Partial Weight Bearing (PWB) Patient Handout**

Your physician has decided that you are to be **partial weight bearing (PWB)** on your surgical/ injured leg. It is important to adhere to these weight-bearing instructions to avoid disrupting the healing process. Your physical therapist can help answer any questions about use and proper fit of your crutches.

**Partial weight bearing (PWB):** Partial weight bearing will be accompanied by a percentage indicating the amount of bodyweight you are allowed to support through your surgical/ injured leg. For example, you may be 25% PWB, which means you are allowed to weight bear 25% of your bodyweight through your surgical/ injured leg. If you were to weigh 200 pounds, this means you could put 50 pounds through your surgical/ injured leg. It can be helpful to place your surgical/injured leg onto a scale and shift your weight onto that side until you get a feel for what your PWB limit is.

### **General Instructions and Tips:**

- Use your crutches for all walking and standing activities until your physician instructs otherwise
- Never lean on your crutches through your armpits- this can cause nerve damage
- Place weight through the crutches by pushing through your hands on the crutch handles.

### **Set Up and Fitting:**

- Standing up straight with your arms at your side, the crutch handle should align with the inside of your wrist
- The height of the crutch should be adjusted so that there is 1-2 inches of space between the top of the crutch and your armpit (this is roughly the width of two fingers)



### **Walking:**

1. Place both crutches 1-2 inches to the outside of each leg, and 6-12 inches in front of you and move your surgical/ injured leg forward
2. Push through your hands to maintain your PWB status and step your non-surgical/ non-injured leg so that it lands in front of both crutches
3. Make sure that you maintain your weight bearing limitations at all times



**Standing Up:**

1. Scoot forward in the chair
2. Hold both crutches in one hand, on the side of your surgical/ injured leg
3. Place both feet flat on the ground and your free hand on the armrest (or seat) of the chair
4. Lean forward at your hips, tighten your core, and then push down through both hands and both feet in order to stand (only place as much weight through the surgical/ injured leg as allowed based on weight bearing status)
5. Once standing and steady, place one crutch under each arm



**Sitting Down:**

1. Back up to the chair so the back of your thighs are touching it
2. Hold both crutches in the hand on your surgical/ injured leg side
3. Reach back slowly with your free hand until you feel the armrest (or seat) of the chair
4. Slowly lower yourself to the chair while making sure to maintain your weight bearing status on your surgical/ injured leg.



### Going up Steps/ Curbs:

1. Step up with your non- surgical/ injured leg by pushing through your hands to maintain your weight bearing precautions
2. Shift your weight onto your non-surgical/non-injured leg and bring your surgical/ injured leg and both crutches up onto the step
3. Repeat until you reach the top

\*\*If there is a railing available, you can hold both crutches on the opposite side of the railing and grab the railing with your free hand. Push through the railing and crutches, step up with your non-surgical/ non-injured leg and then bring crutches up.



### Going Down Steps/ Curbs:

1. Lower both crutches down to the step below
2. Lower your surgical/injured leg down to the same step as the crutches
3. Push through your hands and bring your non-surgical/ non-injured leg down to meet the crutches making sure to maintain your weight bearing precautions
4. Repeat until you reach the bottom

\*\*If there is a railing available, you can hold both crutches on the opposite side of the railing and grab the railing with your free hand. Lower the crutches down, push through the railing and crutches, step down with your non-surgical/ non-injured leg.

