

Learning About How to Use a Cane

Overview

A cane can help you walk when you have an injured hip, leg, knee, or foot. You may also need a cane if you have a weak leg or problems with your balance.

Canes are usually made of metal, wood, or plastic. There are two kinds of canes. A standard (single point) cane has a single rubber tip that does not slip as you lean on it. It usually has a curved (crook) handle. Some canes have a T-handle that might be easier to grasp if your hand is weak. A quad cane has four rubber tips that touch the ground. It's the most stable. You can get a quad cane with the rubber tips closer together or wider apart. The narrow size makes it easier for you to climb stairs.

The length of the cane is important. Your elbow should have only a slight bend when you lean on the cane.

To stay safe when using a cane:

- Look straight ahead, not down at your feet.
- Clear away small rugs, cords, or anything else that could cause you to trip, slip, or fall.
- Be very careful around pets and small children. They can get in your path when you least expect it.
- Be sure the tip of your cane is clean and in good condition to help prevent slipping.
- Avoid slick conditions, such as wet floors and snowy or icy driveways. In bad weather, be especially careful on curbs and steps.

How to use a cane

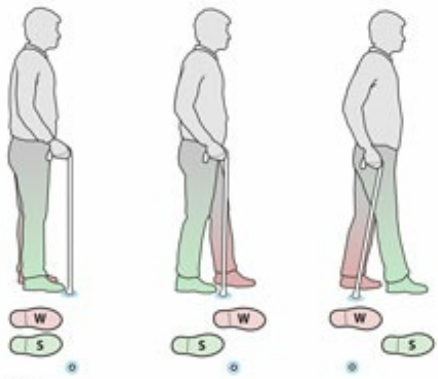
Hold the cane correctly.



© Healthwise, Incorporated

1. Hold the cane in the hand opposite your weak or injured leg. So if your right leg is weak, hold the cane in your left hand.

Know the right way to walk.



© Heathwise, Incorporated

1. Set the cane about 4 inches to the side of your strong leg when you are standing still.
2. To take a step, put most of your weight on your strong leg.
3. Move the cane several inches forward while moving your weak leg forward.

Sit down safely.



© Heathwise, Incorporated

1. To sit, back up to the chair. Touch the back of your legs to the chair.
2. Set the cane aside where you can reach it and it won't fall over.
3. Support most of your weight on your strong leg, and reach back for the arms of the chair.
4. Slowly and carefully lower yourself into the chair.

Stand up safely.



© Heathwise, Incorporated

1. To get up from a chair, first make sure your cane is close by so you can grab it when you stand

up.

2. Grab the arms of the chair, and move your strong leg slightly forward.
3. Scoot forward in the chair until your rear end is near the front of the seat. Lean forward so your head is above your strong foot.
4. With your weight mostly on your strong leg, hold both arms of the chair and push yourself up out of the chair.
5. Grab your cane and set it about 4 inches to the side of your strong leg.

Go upstairs safely.



1. To go up stairs, step up with your strong leg.
2. Bring the cane and your weak leg to the step. Use a handrail if there is one.

Go downstairs safely.



1. To go down stairs, put your cane and weak leg on the lower step.
2. Bring your strong leg to the lower step. This saying may help you remember: "Up with the good, down with the bad."
3. Try this first with another person nearby to steady you if needed.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

Care instructions adapted under license by Orthopaedic Associates Of Corpus Christi. This care instruction is for use with your licensed healthcare professional. If you have questions about a medical condition or this instruction, always ask your healthcare professional. Healthwise, Incorporated disclaims any warranty or liability for your use of this information.