Elbow crutches are used as mobility aids to assist with balance, take pressure off the legs and improve confidence when walking.

Prior to receiving your elbow crutches, you will have been assessed by a physiotherapist of a health care practitioner, who will have ensured the crutches are safe for use and measured them to your specific height requirements. It may take you some time to get used to using your crutches.

**How to use the crutches**

**Non weight bearing:**
1) Keep the affected leg off the ground by holding it slightly in front, or behind with the knee slightly bent.
2) The crutches should be moved one pace forward, slightly apart and level.
3) Lean weight onto the hands and hop to the crutches keeping your weight forward.
4) When you are balanced repeat from step 2.

**Partial weight bearing:**
1) Stand on both legs and move the crutches one pace forward shoulder width apart.
2) Move the affected leg to just behind the crutches, lean on the crutches and step the good leg forward to just beyond the crutches.
3) Try to take some weight through the arms while the good leg is off the ground.
4) Repeat steps 1-3

**Full weight bearing:**
1) Stand on both legs and move the crutches one pace forward shoulder width apart.
2) Move the affected leg to just behind the crutches and step the good leg forward to just beyond the crutches.
3) Try to take full weight through the affected leg while the good leg is off the ground, using crutches to support the limb.
4) Repeat steps 1-3

**Turning:**

When turning, make sure that you step round with the elbow crutches in a small circle rather than twisting on the spot.

**Stairs:**
1) Hold onto one handrail with the spare crutch held together with the handle of the remaining crutch.
2) **Going up** – keeping the crutches on the same level, **step up with the good leg**, push up on crutches and bring injured leg up, finally moving crutches to the same level. Repeat
3) **Going down** – put crutches onto the step below and *lower injured leg*. Take weight through arms, step down with good leg. Repeat

**Standing Up:**
1) Firstly ensure you have secure footwear on and move to the edge of the seat.
2) Crutch should be held on good side, holding the hand grips of both crutches in one hand.
3) Push off from the chair or bed with one hand, with the crutches in your other hand to assist in standing. Straighten up and grip the other crutch, ensuring your arms are secured inside the cuff before moving.
4) Do not try to stand up using your elbow crutches with your arms in them as this will make you unstable and potentially damage your shoulders.

**Sitting Down:**
1) With your crutches, back up to the chair or bed until you feel it behind your knees.
2) Remove both arms from the crutches, place together and hold onto both hand grips with one hand on the good side. (See picture below.)
3) Reach back for the chair or bed with your free hand with the affected leg in front.
4) Slowly lower yourself onto the chair or bed.

If using a single elbow crutch it is usually used in the hand opposite to your weak/operated or painful leg.

Elbow crutches have a rubber ferrule located on the bottom and this must be checked regularly for wear and tear. New ferrules can be collected from your physiotherapy department. If the elbow crutch becomes bent, or there is wear to the metal catch, then a replacement should be sought from the physiotherapy department.