

Clinician \_\_\_\_\_

The weight of your body should be borne by the hands and upper extremities rather than the armpits. Continual pressure on the armpits can eventually cause crutch palsy, which is a weakness of the forearm, wrist and hand.

Maintain an erect posture as much as possible to prevent excessive strain on muscles and joints and to maintain balance.

Each step taken with crutches should be a comfortable distance for you. It is wise to start with a small rather than a large step.

Inspect the crutch tips regularly and replace them if worn.

Keep the crutch tips dry to maintain their surface friction. If the tips become wet, dry them well before use.

The three-point or tripod gait is used when no weight may be put on the injured leg or foot:

1. Move both crutches and the bad leg forward.
2. Move the good leg forward.

### Swing or Tripod Gait:

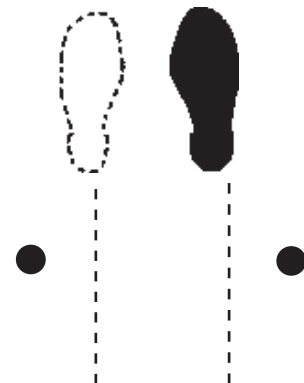
Disabled leg ↴



*Starting position.*



*Put both crutches some distance in advance with weight on good leg.*



*Then swing forward with weight on good leg again.*

To go upstairs:

1. Advance the good leg first up to the next step.
2. Then advance the crutches and the bad leg.

To go downstairs:

1. Place feet forward as far as possible on the step.
2. Advance crutches to the lower step. The bad leg is advanced first and then the good leg--the good extremity shares the work of raising and lowering the body weight with your arms.

Remember the adage: **UP IS GOOD, DOWN IS BAD.** In other words, when going upstairs, use the good leg first. When going downstairs, use the bad leg first.

Rev. 6/09

