



Neuro Café: Walking aids

11th May 2022

Walking aids

- A walking aid is one of several devices an individual may be issued in order to improve their walking pattern, balance or safety while mobilising independently.
- They can also be a means of transferring weight from the upper limb to the ground, in cases where reducing weight bearing through the lower limb is required i.e. post operatively.

Walking aids – how do they help ?

- Increasing stability
- Increasing confidence
- Giving awareness to others around you
- Decreased weight bearing through a limb
- Allows rest periods when needed
- Can reduce breathlessness when walking
- Aid participation in ADL's

Choosing The Right Walking Aid

- **What have you been advised re walking aid?**
 - Physio/ OT advice
 - Weight bearing restrictions
 - Hand function
 - Neglect
- **What do you need it for ?**
 - Shopping – basket ?
 - Walking further – seat to rest?
- **Environment using aid in**
 - Indoors – is there space , width of doors, tight corners, turning circles
 - Outdoors – uneven terrain
 - Slopes
 - Stairs- will you take it upstairs or do you need 2 aids one for upstairs and one for downstairs
- **Storage –**
 - where will you store the aid?
 - can you have clips put up on wall for sticks so they don't fall to ground ?
 - can you store frame securely outdoors so don't have to clean wheels etc?
- **Cosmesis of walking aid:**
 - Will you use it ?
 - How does it make you feel ?

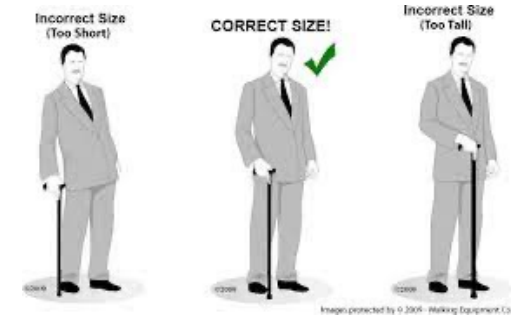
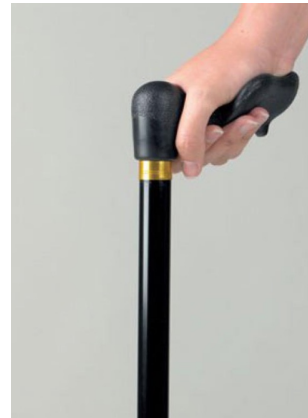
Walking sticks

- Walking sticks can offer increased balance and confidence
- Using a stick can reduce pain
- Can be wooden and cut to height
- Metal and adjusted to height
- Foldable and put in a bag
- Can even have a seat ! Or a light !
- Sticks can act as a visual reminder to others to give you space and time which is important when you may not be confident with walking.
- The majority of people use one stick but you can use two if required to increase balance and symmetry of walking pattern.



Inherited sticks

- Check the ferrules –
 - are they worn?
 - Are they level
 - Do they need replacing
- Is the walking stick the correct height?
 - Wearing your normal shoes, stand in your normal standing position with your arms relaxed and hanging down by your sides, wrist bone should be level with top of stick
- Is it for the right hand? - as some handles are shaped for right and left hand



Walking sticks
offering more
support



Walking stick accessories

- There are a selection of walking stick accessories that are available:
 - Walking stick clips – Clip the stick to the side of a table to stop it dropping on the floor.
 - Straps – Slip around your wrist to avoid dropping your stick.
 - Spikes / crampons ! for icy conditions
 - Ferrules – need to be replaced when worn
 - Lights/laser



Crutches

- Common after orthopaedic injuries with weightbearing restrictions
- Can be used as single or pair
- Offer more stability than a stick
- To stand up with the crutches, it is important that you do not put your hands inside the grey cuff part until you are fully standing. This may cause you to injure your elbow or shoulder. Instead, put one hand on both crutch handles (making an 'H' shape with the hand grips) and one hand on the arm of the chair/bed that you are standing from. Push yourself up to stand.



Nordic walking poles

- Activator poles - deemed good for neuro Nordic walking
- Lightweight, stylish and highly effective!
- Designed by an occupational therapist with your safety in mind
- Ergonomic CoreGrip and strapless for injury prevention
- Adjustable for user heights up to 183 cm
- Secure button locking system (up to 91 kg per pole)
- Comes with Durable bell-shaped rubber tip for stability



Nordic walking

- Nordic Walking has a very specific technique and style which is an intensification of normal walking.
- Whereas just walking with poles can feel clumsy or unsupported, done correctly Nordic Walking can bring about many benefits.

	Nordic Walking	Hiking with Poles
Placement of the poles	Stay in contact with the ground	Come off the ground
Arm swing	Stay at 45 degree angle behind you and behind your feet (out of the way)	In front of you – easy to trip over
Trunk	Rotates to assist fluid movement	Stays fixed and still

Indoor walkers & trolleys



Outdoor walkers



Adaptations to walking aids

- Brakes moved to one side
- Accessories added
- Weighted frames
- Caddys



Safety checks

- Seek advice from a physiotherapist or an occupational therapist to help choose the right aid for you if needed and learn how to use it properly.
- Beware of your posture when using a mobility aid as bad habits can develop quickly.
- Make your environment as safe as possible, declutter, lift rugs
- Check the maximum load the aid is designed to take.
- Check regularly for damage and or wear of walking aid
- Check the brakes are working effectively
- Check adjustable sticks and crutches as they can become worn around the joints

Share your
experiences
of walking
aids

