Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Climbing Stairs with or without walking aids

Version number: **8**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Climbing Stairs with or without Walking Aids

Patient Information

Community REACT Team

- Author ID: RL
- Leaflet Ref: CRT 001
- Last review: September 2024
- Expiry Date: September 2026

Introduction

You may be using a walking aid for a short period of time due to a recent injury or illness or may require a walking aid longer term for a chronic condition such as arthritis. Either way this leaflet should help you remember the correct way to go up and down the stairs, using the walking aids prescribed by your Physiotherapist or other Health Care Professional.

Disclaimer

Not all exercises are suitable for everyone, and while every precaution was taken in selecting these exercises, they do not come without risks. If you have any concerns regarding injury, or whether you should partake in the exercises, then you should consult your GP or Physiother apist prior to commencing any exercises shown here.

It is quite normal to feel some discomfort following exercise, but it is important that this disc omfort eases within 2 hours of finishing the exercise and does not have an overall negative effect on your symptoms.

The exercise plans shown here are designed to be used as a guide and a point of reference; the y are not exhaustive and can be modified and progressed under the supervision of your physiot herapist.

Using one elbow crutch or walking stick with one banister



Climbing the stairs:

Hold the banister with one hand and put the stick or elbow crutch in the other hand.

Climb stairs as follows:



1. The better leg of the two goes up first.



1. Your injured/painful leg next.



1. Then the elbow crutch or stick.

	To go down the stairs: 1. The walking aid is positioned on the step below.
	1. Your injured/painful leg next
	1. Then your good leg. Perform one step at a time unless advised otherwise by your Physiotherapist.

Using two banisters

To go upstairs holding onto both banisters you would follow steps 1 and 2 as for stairs with one walking aid and one banister. Remember **good** leg leads going up, **bad** leg leads going down.

Using two sticks or elbow crutches with no rail or banister

To go upstairs

1. The better leg of the two goes up first.
2. Your injured/painful leg next.
3. Then the elbow crutches or sticks.

To go down the stairs:

1. The walking aid is positioned on the step below.
2. Your injured/painful leg next.
3. Then your good leg.

There are many techniques that can be used to ensure we climb stairs as safely as possible after an injury or illness. If you are struggling with any of the techniques recommended in this leaflet, please seek advice from your Physiotherapist.

If you are walking with two sticks or elbow crutches on the flat and only using one walking aid on the stairs, you will require a third walking aid to leave at the bottom or top of the stairs.

Safety points

- Check that your banister(s) are securely fitted to the wall.
- Make sure you have adequate lighting in halls and stairways.
- Ensure all stair carpets/floor coverings are adequately fitted.
- Wear flat supportive shoes rather than slippers.

Contact information

If you have any questions or queries, which we have not covered in this leaflet, the Community REACT team is available seven days a week 8am to 9pm and will be pleased to answer your questions as clearly and honestly as they can.

Telephone 0300 707 1221



Version number: **8**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

All rights reserved © 2026
WWL Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust