

# Fitting and Walking with a Cane

## Fitting a cane

Some canes can be adjusted but some can't. Make sure your cane fits you properly.

- **Check the bend of your elbow.** With your cane in your hand, your elbow should bend at a comfortable angle, about 15 to 20 degrees. You might bend your elbow slightly more if you're using the cane mainly for balance.
- **Check your wrist height.** With your arm hanging straight down at your side, the top of the cane should line up with the crease in your wrist.

If your cane is too long, you'll need to work harder to pick it up and move it. If your cane is too short, you might lean to one side. That can throw off your balance.



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## Walking with a cane

Hold your cane in the hand that's **opposite** of your weak or injured leg. Move the cane along with that leg, so each time you step, you move the cane too. That gives you support as you walk. When you step forward with the other leg, don't move the cane.



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### **Using a cane on steps**

As you go up steps, use your free hand to hold onto the railing if there is one. Step up first with your stronger leg. Then step up with your other leg as you move the cane at the same time. To go down steps, hold onto the railing. Move the cane at the same time you move your weaker leg down to the step. Then step down with your other leg.



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### **Checking the tip of your cane**

The rubber tip on the end of a cane grips the floor much like the tread on car tires grips the road. The tip of a cane can help provide traction on most surfaces. Check the tip from time to time. If the tread looks worn or if the tip has become stiff, replace it. Replacement cane tips usually are available at pharmacies and medical supply stores.



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