

## Using a Cane

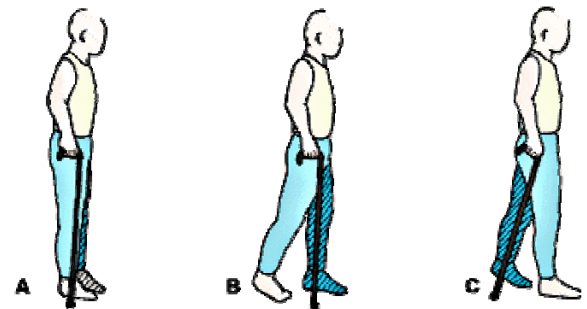
### Why should I use a cane?

Many people with osteoarthritis of the hip or knee use a cane to relieve some of the pain in their joints. That's because using a cane takes roughly 40% of your weight off your painful joints. A cane will help you walk faster and for longer periods of time without pain. It will also give you more balance and stability. You are less likely to fall because the cane gives you a third point of support.

### Do I use a cane beside my strong leg or sore leg?

Using a cane on the same side as your sore leg actually puts more pressure on your painful joints. Hold your cane on the same side as your stronger leg to shift some weight off your sore leg. You will find you naturally swing your cane forward when you move your sore leg. That's because we naturally move opposite arms and legs when we walk.

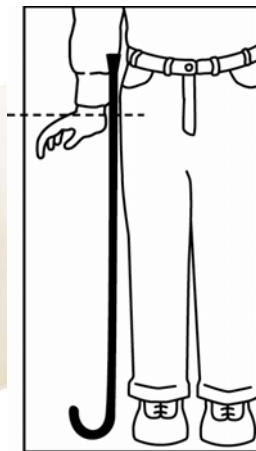
The shaded leg is the weak leg



Walking with a cane

source: <http://www.clearcanes.com/caneuseq.gif>

### How tall should my cane be?



Stand up and let your arms hang comfortably by your side. The top of the cane should reach your wrist.

You can change the size of most metal canes with the click of a button. Wood canes will need to be cut. Ask your health provider if you don't know how to size your cane.

### What kind of cane should I buy?

Choose a sturdy cane with a comfortable handle. It should also have a secure tip that will grip the ground and won't slip.

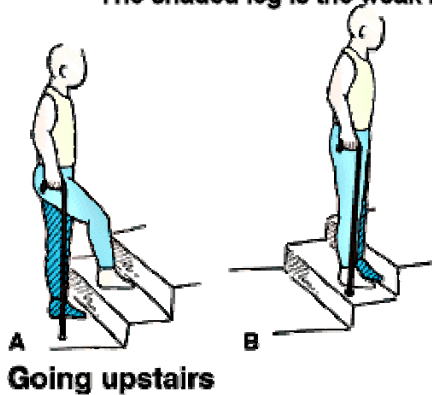
### Do I need to use a cane all the time?

Everyone's needs are different. Some people need a cane whenever they are on their feet. Others will only use a cane on long walks or when they are on rough ground. Talk to your health care provider about what is right for you.

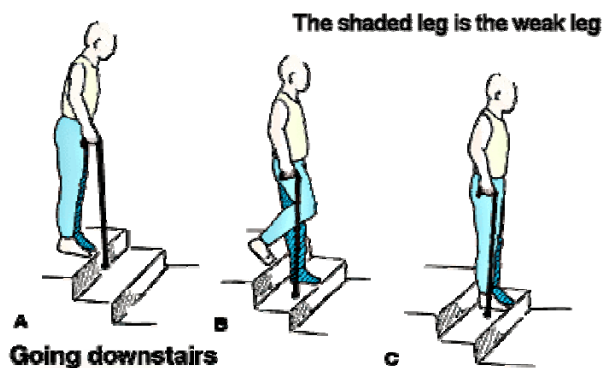
## How do I go up and down stairs and curbs?

When you're going up or down stairs or stepping on and off a curb, it's important to make your strong leg take the weight of lifting and lowering your body.

**The shaded leg is the weak leg**



**To go up:** face the curb or stairs squarely. Hold on to the railing (if possible). Step up with your strong leg and then follow with your painful leg and cane. Move your strong leg first as you continue up the stairs.



**To go down the stairs or curb:** step down with the cane and painful leg. Then follow with the strong leg.

source: <http://www.clearcanes.com/caneuseq.gif>

## How can I use my cane safely?

- ✓ Wear sturdy shoes with a rough rubber tread.
- ✓ Wait to get your balance before starting to walk.
- ✓ Stand up straight and look ahead. Do not look down at your feet.
- ✓ Replace the tip of your cane when it gets worn down.
- ✓ Minimize clutter on the floor. Remove throw rugs, telephone cords, or anything else that could cause you to trip.

The height of my cane is: \_\_\_\_\_

Use my cane in my \_\_\_\_\_ hand