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TRANSITIONING OFF YOUR CRUTCHES AND BRACE

Back to Walking Normally · A Step-by-Step Guide

You are moving from **non-weight bearing back to walking normally**. Follow these five steps **in order**.

YOUR FIVE STEPS, IN ORDER	
STEP 1 FULL WEIGHT, BOTH CRUTCHES	**Put full weight on your leg, still using both crutches** • Step through with your **full weight on your operated leg** with each step. • The crutches are now for **balance and confidence**, not to take weight off your leg. • Practice at home first. Walk **heel-to-toe** as normally as you can.
STEP 2 ONE CRUTCH, THEN NONE	**Go down to one crutch, then no crutches** • Once full weight feels natural, use **one crutch, held in the hand opposite your operated leg**. • When you are ready, try short distances without any crutch. Start at home on flat surfaces. • Take your time. There is no rush.
STEP 3 BRACE OFF AT HOME	**Take the brace off inside the house** • Once you are walking comfortably without crutches (brace still on), start taking the brace off **inside the house**. • Begin with short walks on flat, familiar surfaces. **Put the brace back on if you feel unsteady.** That is completely fine. • Build up gradually over several days until walking brace-free at home feels routine.
STEP 4 BRACE OFF OUTSIDE	**Take the brace off outside** • Once brace-free feels natural indoors, try it outside. Start with **calm, flat, familiar** places. • Progress to **uneven ground, curbs and stairs** as your confidence grows.
STEP 5 CROWDED PLACES: THE LAST STEP	**Keep the brace on in crowds until last** • Keep the brace on at **school, sporting events, and other busy or crowded places** until you feel completely confident. • The risk in a crowd is being **bumped or jostled** unexpectedly. Your brace protects against that. • Once you trust your leg in any setting, **you are done with the brace.**

The one rule for every step

- **Do not move to the next step until the current one feels comfortable and confident.**
- There is **no fixed timeline**. Go at your own pace.
- Questions about your progress? Call us at **(425) 656-5060**.