

A Guide to the Use of a Walking Stick

Measuring the Correct Height for a Stick:

It is important that your walking stick is at the correct height for you to gain maximum benefit and to allow your posture to remain symmetrical. An incorrect height stick results in incorrect posture and can lead to physical injury, particularly to the shoulder.

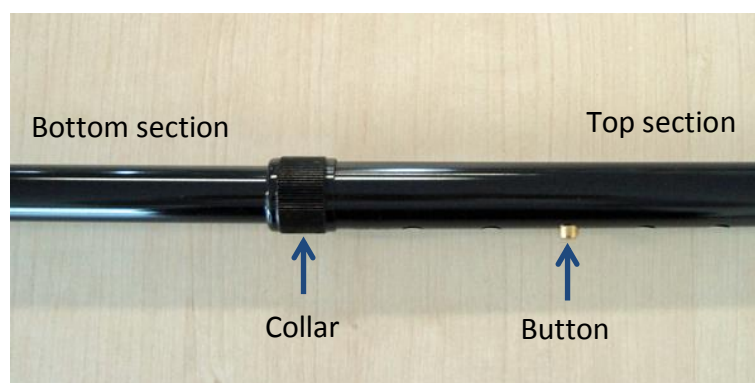
To calculate the correct height of your walking stick:

- Stand with your arms relaxed by your side wearing your usual shoes
- Look in a mirror to locate the bump of bone on the little finger side of your wrist, or ask someone to help you
- The height of this bone is the location for the top of the walking stick handle
- This should allow for your elbow to be slightly bent (about 30 degrees of flexion) when holding the stick



Adjusting Your Stick:

- Wooden walking sticks will need to be cut to size after removing the rubber ferrule on the base of the stick. Be careful not to cut too much off.
- For height adjustable aluminium walking sticks:
 - Loosen the collar at the junction of the two sections of the stick (most sticks have a screw collar, if the collar is not a screw type, you do not need to loosen it)
 - Push in the button on the top section of the stick and push/pull the bottom section until the button pops out into the next hole
 - Recheck the height of the stick and adjust again if necessary
 - When the stick is at the correct height, tighten the collar on the stick



Which Hand to Hold the Walking Stick?

To provide support for a weaker leg, hold the stick in the opposite hand to the weaker leg. This will provide extra support for your weaker leg when taking a step.

If you are using the stick for balance, then try using the stick in either hand and make a decision based on what feels most comfortable. A walking stick can be used in both hands to provide even more stability.

Walking Technique Using a Stick:

A normal walking pattern involves the opposite arm and leg moving forward at the same time. This also happens when using a stick. The arm with the walking stick and the weaker leg move forward together. Your weight is then distributed over the weaker leg and the stick.

Initially you may have some difficulty coordinating walking with a stick. If you do, slow your walking down and break it up into smaller parts, e.g., place the stick forward, step forward with the weaker leg, then bring the stronger leg through and then repeat the cycle until walking becomes rhythmical.

If you are using a stick in both hands the same principle applies – opposite arm and leg move together.

Check the Rubber Ferrule!

Check the rubber ferrule on the end of your walking stick regularly as it will wear with use and need replacing. Once the base of the ferrule is worn, your walking stick will lose its grip and you will be at risk of sliding, particularly on smooth, wet surfaces – it is like driving a car with bald tyres!

Free Walking Stick Assessment and Safety Check ...

You are welcome to come into our showroom or visit our Mobile Service vans when they are out in the community for a free assessment and safety check of your walking stick. If necessary, we will adjust your walking stick to the correct height and advise you on its use. We will also advise you on the condition of the rubber ferrule and if replacement is necessary (replacement ferrules cost around \$5).

Contact DRC Auckland:

14 Erson Avenue, Royal Oak, Auckland

Phone: 09 625 0322

Email: drc@disabilityresource.org.nz

Information: www.disabilityresource.org.nz

Products: www.shop.disabilityresource.org.nz

Mobile Service locations: www.disabilityresource.org.nz/mobile

