Measuring and Using a Walking Frame

Walking aids are used by a variety of people. This includes people recovering from injury, people with reduced balance strength and endurance, or people with pain or instability in any weight bearing joint used in walking.

The choice of walking aid should suit a person’s abilities and personal requirements. It is recommended to seek the assistance of a physiotherapist in this process. A physiotherapist is also able to provide advice and training in the correct use of the device.

(Also see Fact Sheet “Walking Frame and Wheeled Walker Selection”)

**MEASURING**

Ensure the person being measured is wearing their everyday shoes. Measure from the wrist crease to the ground approximately 15cm from the side of the foot. Adjust the handgrips to this height.

The user should have a 15-30 degree bend at the elbow when holding the frame and standing upright.

**USE**

**Hopper frame:** Stand upright with your feet together holding the frame with both hands. Lift the frame forward a small distance and put it down with all four tips firmly on the ground. Step forward with one leg whilst placing your weight through the frame and then bring the other leg alongside.

Do not step too far forward. Imagine a line between the back two legs of the frame and do not put your heels in front of it.

**Two wheeled walker:** A similar gait to the above may be used without the need to lift the frame forward. A more normal gait pattern can also be used, but the two rear stoppers provide some resistance. These are best for smooth indoor surfaces.

**Four wheeled walkers:** This style of walker allows an uninterrupted normal gait pattern with good maneuverability.

**SAFETY**

Walking frames are not suitable for use on stairs. Pick up style frames can manage a single kerb step. Do not use the frame to get up from or down to a chair, unless it has been designed especially for this purpose. Move slowly when turning around, taking small steps and using the frame as described above. Do not overload the tray or basket as it may disrupt balance.

**NEED TO KNOW MORE?**

Telephone, fax or e-mail your enquiry to obtain further information from an occupational therapist about products. Alternatively, you can call LifeTec Queensland to make an appointment to see or trial equipment at the our display centre or possibly to try equipment through the outreach service.

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