



A walker is intended to help an individual remain mobile by providing assistance in walking. It accomplishes this purpose by transferring some of the function normally performed by the legs and feet to the arms and hands. The most important of these functions is usually weight bearing, but others include balance as well as standing or walking stability.

If the walker was delivered to your home by our representative or if you personally picked it up from our store, our representative has no doubt adjusted it properly to your height. If a friend or family member picked it up for you, it is important to adjust it to the proper height before using it.

HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT

The height of the hand grips should be such that it provides a slight bend in the elbow when you are standing straight and holding the hand grip. A 20 to 30 degree bend in the elbow is usually considered desirable. This can easily be achieved if you can safely stand for a few moments, look straight ahead with your shoulders squared and your arms hanging relaxed at your sides. While you maintain this position, a family member or friend should adjust the height of all four walker legs to place the height of the hand grips slightly above your wrists.

Do not attempt to stand if you cannot do so safely. You may have to approximate the height of the walker until a later time when a more accurate fitting can be accomplished safely. After making the height adjustment, check carefully to ensure that all four legs are locked securely in the selected position.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

If you have had the benefit of instruction by your physician or therapist, follow those instructions carefully.

If you are using a walker for the first time, it is advisable to have someone present who can provide assistance until you become familiar with its use.

You should follow slightly behind the walker, taking care not to step all the way into the front of the walker frame. Doing so could result in the loss of balance or the tendency to fall forward. Instead, you should lift the walker and place it forward so that the rear legs are a few inches ahead. You should then step forward so that your legs are about even with the rear of the walker. This procedure keeps the walker safely ahead, providing four stable legs on which to lean, if necessary.

ALWAYS TAKE SHORT STEPS. Overstriding tends to cause loss of balance.

If your physician's or therapist's instruction differ in any way from those given here, follow those instructions explicitly.

If your walker is a folding model, become familiar with the process of folding and unfolding it. Anytime the walker is unfolded, check carefully to ensure that the folding mechanism is locked securely in the open position before using.

The rubber tips on your walker should be inspected regularly. Worn or damaged tips should be replaced immediately. Hand grips should be checked frequently. A hand grip that rotates during weight bearing can cause a fall. The security of height adjustment mechanisms should also be confirmed often. **Remember:** safe use of your walker requires care, discretion and common sense.

SPECIAL MODEL WALKERS

If your physician or therapist ordered a reciprocating walker for your use, he or she has determined that this type of walker may assist you with better coordination and encourage a more natural gait.

If you have use of only one arm and hand, a hemi walker may have been ordered. This type of walker has a center handle that can be set for either right or left hand use.

If extreme weakness makes it difficult for you to lift the weight of the walker, wheel attachments may have been ordered for the two front legs. It is essential to exercise added caution with this type of walker so that it does not roll away, causing a fall.

Crutch attachments are sometimes ordered for individuals with impaired use of hands or forearms. These accessories can be installed on one or both sides of a walker.

The procedure for correct height adjustment and the basic instructions for use are much the same for all of these special models as they are for the standard walker. **REMEMBER:** be sure to follow your physician's or therapist's instructions.