

Move with Confidence: Your Journey to Safe and Independent Mobility

A comprehensive guide for walker users and caregivers to master safe movement, prevent falls, and enhance freedom.



Your First Step: Choosing the Right Mobility Partner

Walkers are designed to provide support, but not all are the same. The right choice depends on your needs, **strength**, and where you'll be using it. Always consult with a healthcare professional to determine the level of support you require.



Walking Frame

No wheels, offering maximum stability. Best for indoor use on flat surfaces. Requires lifting for each step.



3-Wheel / Tri-Wheel Walker

Compact and maneuverable, ideal for tighter indoor spaces. Usually includes a basket or bag.



4-Wheel Walker / Rollator

Great for outdoor use with a seat for rest breaks. Larger wheels handle bumps better. Comes in A-frame and side-folding models for easier transport.



Forearm Walker

Provides maximum support for those who need to offload more weight from their legs. Suited for users who cannot use standard handgrips.



A Perfect Fit is a Safer Fit

An improperly adjusted walker can harm your posture and balance, increasing fall risk. Before your first step, ensure your walker is tailored to your body.



1. Stand Tall

Wear your everyday walking shoes and stand upright inside the walker with your arms relaxed at your sides.



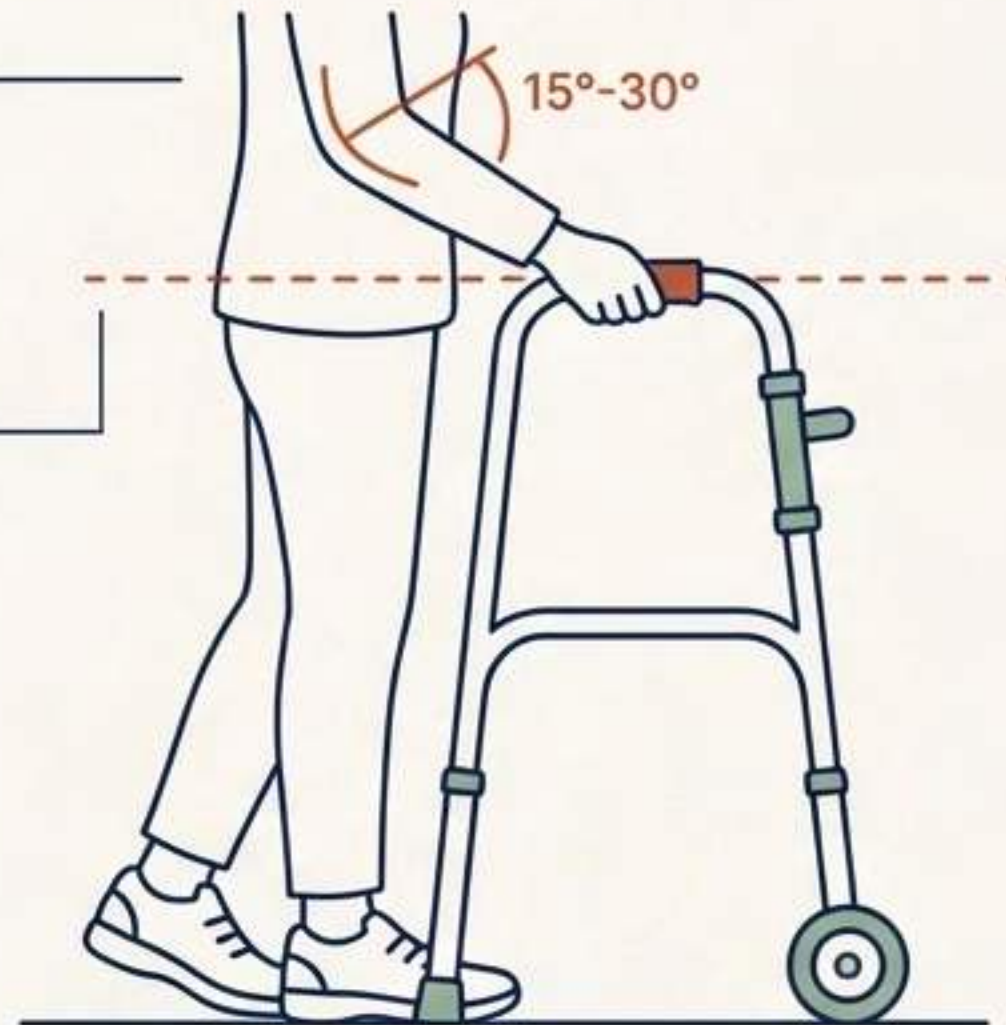
2. Find Your Wrist Crease

The walker's handles should be perfectly level with the crease of your wrist. Adjust all legs of the walker until they align.



3. Check Your Elbows

When you place your hands on the grips, your elbows should have a comfortable, slight bend of about 15-30 degrees.



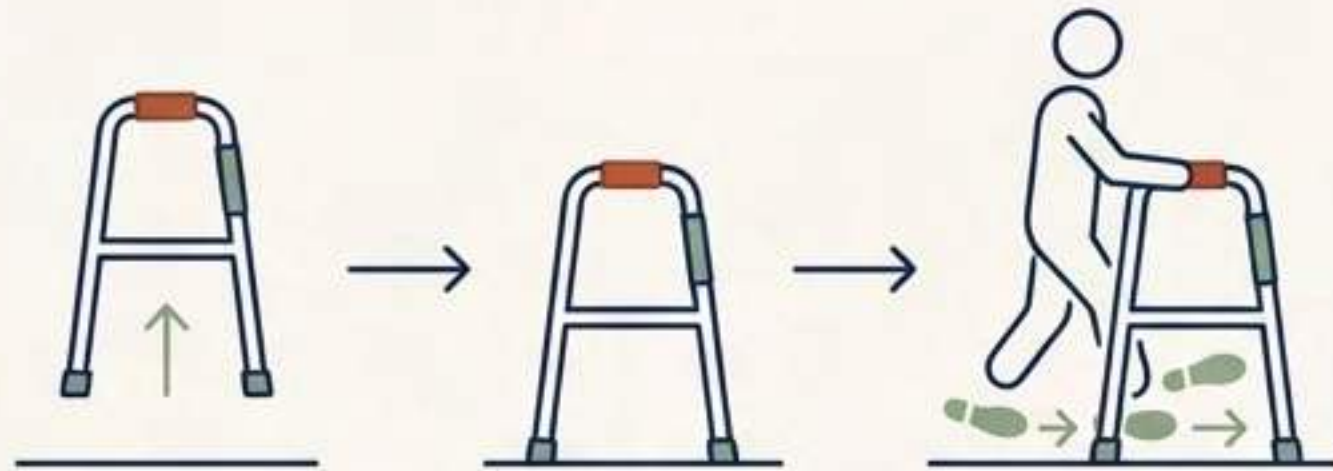
Key Takeaway: If you have to hunch over, the handles are too low. If your arms are awkwardly raised or straight, they are too high.

Mastering the Art of Walking

Proper technique ensures stability and maximizes the support your walker provides.

For Standard Walkers (No Wheels)

Lift and Step



1. Lift the walker and place it a comfortable arm's length in front of you. Ensure all four legs are stable on the ground.
2. Step forward with your weaker or 'operative' leg first, keeping it within the boundary of the walker.
3. Push down through the handles and step forward with your stronger leg, bringing it slightly ahead of the weaker one.

Never walk "inside" the frame or too close to the front bar. This can shift your balance backward.

For Rollators (With Wheels)

Push and Glide



1. Think of your rollator as a shopping cart. Keep it a fixed, short distance in front of you.
2. Gently push the rollator ahead as you walk, maintaining an upright posture.
3. Stay between the back wheels. Avoid letting the rollator get too far ahead of you, which can lead to leaning and loss of balance.

Take it slow and steady. A rollator is for control, not speed.

Safely Sitting and Standing: Your Most Important Moves

Never use the walker to pull yourself up or lower yourself down. **It can tip over.** The stability should come from the surface you are sitting on.

How to Sit Down Safely



1. **Back Up:** Walk backward until you feel the chair, bed, or toilet directly against the back of your legs.

2. **Lock Brakes:** If using a rollator, firmly lock the brakes.



3. **Reach Back:** With one hand still on the walker for balance, reach back with your other hand to find the armrest of the chair. Then, do the same with your other hand.

4. **Lower Slowly:** Lean forward slightly and gently lower yourself onto the seat.

How to Stand Up Safely



1. **Scoot Forward:** Move to the front edge of the chair with your feet flat on the floor.



2. **Position Walker:** Place the walker directly in front of you. Lock the brakes if it's a rollator.



3. **Push Up:** Place both hands on the armrests of the chair. Push up to a standing position.



4. **Grasp Handles:** Only after you are stable on your feet, grasp the walker handles one at a time.

Conquering Curbs with Confidence

Navigating curbs requires extra caution. Remember this simple rule: **"Up with the Good, Down with the Bad."** This means you lead with your strong leg going up and your weak leg going down.

To Go UP a Curb



1. Get as close to the curb as possible.



2. Lift the walker and place all four legs securely on the curb.



3. Step up with your stronger leg first.



4. Bring your weaker leg up to meet it.

To Go DOWN a Curb



1. Get as close to the edge of the curb as possible.



2. Place the walker down on the lower level, ensuring all legs are stable.



3. Step down with your weaker leg first.



4. Bring your stronger leg down to meet it.

Safety Warning: Never go down a curb backward.



A Critical Safety Warning About Stairs

Walkers and rollators are **not designed for use on stairs**. Attempting to use a walker on stairs is a significant fall risk. Whenever possible, use an elevator or ask for assistance.

If Stairs Are Unavoidable and You Have a Handrail:

The Mnemonic Still Applies: "Up with the good, down with the bad!"

Going Up



1. Fold the walker and hold it in one hand.



2. Place your other hand on the sturdy handrail.



3. Step up with your good leg first, then bring your operative/weaker leg up.

Going Down



1. Hold the folded walker in one hand and the handrail in the other.



2. Place the walker on the step below you.



3. Step down with your operative/weaker leg first, then bring your good leg down.

This technique should only be used if you are confident in your strength and balance, and a handrail is available. Consult a physical therapist for personalized instruction.

The #1 Mistake: Forgetting to Lock the Brakes

Most rollators have a built-in seat, which is excellent for taking a rest. But sitting without first locking the brakes can cause the walker to slide out from under you, leading to a serious fall.



The Golden Rule:

ALWAYS ENGAGE THE LOCKING BRAKES BEFORE YOU SIT DOWN. ALWAYS.

- Squeeze the loop brake handles to slow down.
- Push down on the handles until they click to lock the wheels in place.
- Double-check that the walker is stationary before you begin to sit.

Six More Habits That Compromise Your Safety

Small, seemingly harmless mistakes can lead to a loss of balance and falls. Be mindful to avoid these common pitfalls.



Walking Too Fast

A walker is for stability, not speed. Slow, deliberate steps give you more control, especially on uneven or slippery surfaces.



Leaning or Over-relying

Walk upright *within* the walker. Use it for balance, not as a crutch to support all your weight. Leaning can make it unstable.



Overloading Your Walker

A heavy bag hanging from the handles can throw off the walker's balance and cause it to tip. Use the built-in basket or pouch, but don't overload it.



Using it on the Wrong Terrain

Standard indoor walkers are not built for grass, gravel, or cracked sidewalks. Use a model with larger, all-terrain wheels for outdoor adventures.



Not Paying Attention

Always be aware of your surroundings. Watch for rugs, cords, pets, or clutter on the floor.



Wearing the Wrong Shoes

Your footing is just as important as your walker. Wear supportive, well-fitting shoes with non-slip soles. Avoid slippers, flip-flops, or high heels.

Your Walker Needs a Regular Tune-Up

Just like any tool with moving parts, your walker requires occasional upkeep to function safely and effectively. A quick check can prevent a component from failing when you need it most.

A Simple Maintenance Checklist

Weekly Inspection



Brakes: Do they engage smoothly and lock securely?
(See next slide for more detail).



Wheels: Do they roll smoothly without wobbling? Check for and remove any built-up hair or debris.



Frame: Look for any cracks or bent parts. Tighten any loose bolts or screws.



Grips & Tips: Are the hand grips secure and not worn out?
Are the rubber tips on the legs intact and not worn smooth?

Regular Cleaning



Wipe down the frame, handles, and wheels with a mild soap and water solution.



Properly storing your walker in a dry, safe area will also prolong its life.



Pro Tip

If something feels loose, sounds strange, or isn't working right, don't wait. Get it professionally serviced.

A Deeper Look at Your Brakes

Well-functioning brakes are essential for your safety, giving you control and preventing the walker from rolling away unexpectedly.

Part 1: Know Your Brakes



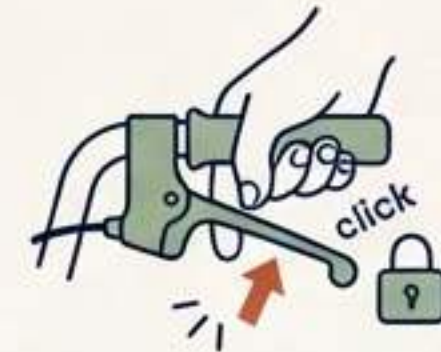
Standard Loop Brakes

Squeeze the handle to slow down or stop.



Push-Down Brakes

Activated by pushing down on the walker handles.



Locking Brakes

A feature on most rollators. Push the brake lever down until it clicks to lock the wheels, keeping the walker stationary.

Part 2: Signs of Brake Problems



- Unusual Noises: Squeaking or squealing when you apply the brakes.



- Poor Response: A 'soft' or 'spongy' feel; the brakes don't engage immediately.



- Uneven Braking: The walker pulls to one side when you brake.



- Failure to Lock: The locking mechanism won't engage or stay in place.

Action: If you notice any of these signs, seek professional help to have the brakes adjusted or repaired.

Creating a Walker-Friendly Home

Your safety depends on both how you use your walker and the environment you move through. Use this checklist to find and fix hazards in your home.



Floors & Pathways

- ☐ Remove throw rugs or secure them with double-sided tape.
- ☐ Keep paths clear of furniture, papers, shoes, and other clutter.
- ☐ Coil or tape down all electrical and phone cords against the wall.



Stairs & Steps

- ☐ Keep stairs completely free of any objects.
- ☐ Ensure handrails are secure and present on both sides of the stairway.



Lighting

- ☐ Ensure good lighting in all rooms, especially on paths to the bathroom.
- ☐ Place a lamp close to the bed that's easy to reach.
- ☐ Install nightlights in hallways and bathrooms.



Bathroom

- ☐ Use a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips in the tub or shower.
- ☐ Consider installing grab bars by the toilet and inside the shower.



Your Shoes are the Foundation of Your Stability

A top-of-the-line walker can't prevent a fall if your footwear is unstable or slippery.
Good shoes provide the solid footing you need to move with confidence.



Wear These



- Non-slip soles (rubber or similar grip)
- Good fit (not too loose or too tight)
- Supportive, closed-back design
- Low or no heel



Avoid These



- Slippery soles
- No back support
- High heels
- Worn out or broken

Your 5-Point Checklist for Confident Mobility

Keep these five principles in mind every time you use your walker to ensure you are moving as safely as possible.



1

Perfect Fit

Are the handles at your wrist crease with a slight bend in your elbow?



2

Brakes Locked

Before sitting or standing from a rollator, are the brakes firmly locked?



3

Safe Transfers

Are you pushing up from your chair to stand, and reaching back for it to sit?



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4

Clear Environment

Are your floors and pathways free of clutter, cords, and loose rugs?



5

Proper Footwear

Are you wearing supportive, non-slip shoes?

Your Walker is Your Tool for Independence

A walker is much more than a mobility aid—it's a key to freedom, confidence, and continued engagement with the world around you. By choosing the right equipment, mastering the correct techniques, and being mindful of your surroundings, you are investing in your own safety and independence.

Move with confidence. You've got places to go, and you deserve to get there safely.