

GRADUAL WEANING PROTOCOL

Today you have been instructed to begin to stop using a physical aid such as crutches, a cane, walking boot or a brace. Congratulations on your continued progress! When weaning from using a physical aid it is important to remember to be safe and not push things too fast to avoid hurting yourself. Our first priority is your safety and comfort, but we also want you to return to your regular activities as quickly as possible.

TIMING: Every person is different when it comes to how long it takes to completely stop using an assistive device. There is no “right” amount of time. In general, we have found that 1-2 weeks is a reasonable goal for most people, but some of our patients have progressed during a single day while others have taken longer. If, at any point, you feel that there is pain that does not subside an hour after you rest and elevate your leg, then you may have progressed too quickly and you should go back to the prior level of usage for another day or two.

Remember, “two steps forward, one step back” is OK. “Three steps forward, five steps back” means you’ve done too much.

STEP 1: Around the house: Stop using the device around the house. You have plenty of places to sit if you need a rest and you are never far from a safe handhold if you feel unsteady.

STEP 2: Getting the mail: Next stop using the device on short walks out of the house such as when getting the mail or talking to the neighbors.

STEP 3: Walking near home or in protected areas: Try going for progressively longer walks near your home or around a shopping center with lots of places to rest if needed.

STEP 4: Out and about: Stop using the device entirely. Keep it in the back of your car trunk “just in case” but hopefully you will forget it is there and then move it to storage in a month or two once you know you no longer need it.