

## Using a Cane

1. Be sure a cane has been prescribed for the person you care for. A physical therapist or medical equipment supply professional can fit a cane properly.
2. There are two ways to hold a cane:
  - a. If the person has an injury or weakness, have him or her hold the cane in the hand on their **strong side**, opposite the side of the injury.
  - b. If the person has a problem with balance, have him or her hold the cane in any hand, whichever is most comfortable.
3. To Walk with a Cane
  - a. Take the first step with the cane and the weak leg, stepping on the ground at the same time.
  - b. The cane and foot should advance about 6 to 10 inches.
  - c. Then take a step with the stronger leg, keeping the cane in place.
  - d. When first starting with a cane, the person can move the cane first, then the injured leg. This slows walking and increases safety until the person feels comfortable.
  - e. Remember the person takes a step with the weak leg and cane together.
4. To Climb Stairs
  - a. Use extra caution.
  - b. Grasp the handrail on the weak side and take the first step up on the strong leg.
  - c. Hold the cane in the hand on the strong side.
  - d. If the handrail is only in place on the person's strong side, use the handrail and hold the cane in the opposite hand until reaching the top.
  - e. Then step up with the weak leg.
  - f. Take one step at a time. The weak leg should never be used to support the person's weight as they step up
  - g. Take steps slowly and be sure you have good balance.
5. To Go Down Stairs
  - a. Use Caution
  - b. Take the first step down with the cane and the injured leg.
  - c. Next, step down to the step with the strong leg. This allows the stronger leg to be used to support the body weight as the person steps down.