



**GoodbyeCrutches**  
**Hello Freedom!**

# EXERCISING ON CRUTCHES

## STAY SAFE AND FIT ON ONE FOOT





When you are recovering from an injury or a surgery that has made you stay non-weight bearing, you may feel like you are condemned to a sedentary lifestyle. While there are some things you can't do and even more things you shouldn't do, being non-weight bearing doesn't mean you can't stay fit and exercise in a safe manner. You may have to adjust your lifestyle to fit having just one foot to stand on, but you can use this guide to help you keep your health on track while you recover.

## Diet

You know you are supposed to eat a healthy diet at all times. Your doctor tells you so. You hear about it on the news. And you read healthy recipes in the magazines. It's common sense. But did you know that eating in a healthy manner is even more important when you are recovering from an injury or a surgery? Well, now you do!

When you are recovering, your body is using energy in a whole different way than it does in everyday life. Normally, you need nutrients and calories as fuel to keep your body operating. While that is still the case during recovery, your body is also working to heal itself. If you do not give it the right nutrients and vitamins to do that, your recovery could take much longer.

### **Note:**

*This is not medical advice, but tips from others who have been where you are. If any of these tips go against what your doctor or health care provider has directed, follow their instructions. They are trained medical professionals who know your unique circumstances.*



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## Healthy Diet Recovery Tips

How fast you recover depends on a lot of things. How bad your injury is, how your body works, how well you adhere to your doctors recommendations to stay off your healing leg, your diet, and many other factors. Use these tips to help keep yourself on the right healthy diet track to aid your recovery.

### Tip #1: Drink Water



Your body is made up of more water than any other ingredient. When you put extra water in, you will feel better all around. You may have heard that water is good for your skin, but it is good for pretty much every other part of your body as well. Many other drinks dehydrate you, and when you are recovering, dehydration is the last thing you want to deal with. You don't have to give up your morning coffee or afternoon tea, but try to limit your intake of sugary, calorie-laden beverages and stick to water instead. If you get tired of the bland taste, get some flavored waters to help you out. Avoiding the empty calories will also help you avoid weight gain.

### Tip#2: Keep Healthy Snacks Near

When you are sitting around a lot more than you did in the past, you may feel the snack attack hit more often. You need to keep up your energy level, and it's okay to snack between meals...as long as you do so in moderation, and you grab the right items to quench your hunger. Instead of stocking



up on chips and candy bars, keep a fresh fruit basket near the couch so you can access apples and bananas any time you're hungry. Get a few granola bars and some nuts to help you enjoy that crunch you crave as well. It's okay to have chocolate, ice cream, and other items from time to time, but make those snacks special treats and keep healthy items in the majority.



### **Tip#3: Utilize Protein**

You need to keep your body strong, not only to heal itself, but also to give you the energy you need to get from place to place. In order to do both, protein is key. Try to lean toward lean proteins like fish, chicken, and lean meats. You can enjoy protein drinks mixed with fruits and get all of the good stuff in at once. When you feel your energy dip, instead of grabbing the nearest caffeinated beverage, try some protein.

### **Tip#4: Watch Serving Sizes**

In normal life, you may take what you want and not worry too much about how much you're having. But when you're recovering from an injury, you need to keep an eye on how much you're eating each time you have a meal. Match your intake to your new activity level. Fill your plate with fruits and vegetables and other nutrient-rich items first. It's perfectly okay to have potatoes, bread, and other items, but you need to be careful not to fill up on things that won't further your recovery...even if they taste great!



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## **Tip#5: Listen to your Body**

You will want to listen to what your body is telling you in all portions of your recovery. The same can be said about the way you eat. If you are sitting on the couch and want a snack, are you really hungry or just bored? Try to get in tune with your body to help you with the diet aspect of the recovery as much as possible. If your body needs a certain nutrient, it will crave certain items. Try to make healthy decisions as much as possible. Your recovery will go much faster if you do.

## **Recovery Super Foods**

Dieticians say that there are certain foods that can not only improve your health, but can also speed up the healing process. When your body is in recovery mode, it needs more of certain things, and if you give it those things, the recovery process can go much faster than predicted. Here are a few recovery super foods that you might want to stock up on to utilize during the recovery process.

### **Seafood**

Love fish and other kinds of seafood? Now is the time to enjoy it often. Seafood has lots of beneficial oils and fats as well as ample nutrients. You can improve your overall health and your body's ability to heal. The elements in seafood help muscles rebuild and ligaments heal. They can also aid bone strength and your all around mobility. Seafood may give you that extra boost to get back to



your normal life that much faster. Warning: Fish oil supplements can thin your blood and increase bleeding. Make sure to consult your doctor before adding this to your diet.



## **Watermelon**

Watermelon is made up of mostly water, an essential ingredient to anyone recovering from surgery or an injury. Not only that, but they are delicious and can help you heal in many different ways. It can be hard to drink enough water to keep your hydration levels up. When you are hungry and need to hydrate, watermelon is a great way to take care of both issues.

## **Pumpkin Seeds**

Crunchy snacks are hard to resist, and if you're able to grab pumpkin seeds, there's no reason to resist them at all. These seeds have a large amount of zinc and vitamins B, C, D, E and even K. They can give your body a super charge to help it function better. They even contain calcium, potassium, and a number of other things that improve your overall health. When you need a healthy snack that will only further your recovery, make pumpkin seeds your first stop.

## **Chocolate**

Good news for chocolate lovers everywhere. Raw Cacao is actually a great super food for healing. Cacao has beneficial nutrients and vitamins in it and can help your body get a burst of energy as



well. Unfortunately, you don't often see cacao in its raw, natural form. Instead, it comes in all different forms of chocolate, which means there are sugar and other items added to it. You can enjoy bits of chocolate during recovery, and it can help you out, but make sure you don't overdo it and hinder your healthy eating plan.



## **Berries**

Berries of any kind are packed with antioxidants. This ingredient can help speed your healing in all sorts of different ways. And you can find the ingredient in anything from blueberries and blackberries all the way to cranberries and cherries. Grab a handful of berries and know that you are getting many different elements you need...along with a delicious food!

## **Exercise**

When your doctor tells you that you have to remain in non-weight bearing mode for a certain amount of time, you may mentally hang up your running shoes. So long exercise! But while there are many exercises that you can't and shouldn't do, there are also plenty that you can and should do. Use these examples to change your exercise regime for the recovery process.



## Non-Weight Bearing Exercises

If you are to remain in non-weight bearing mode, you cannot put any weight on your injured leg or you risk your recovery going backward instead of forward. In order to remain physically fit during this time of your life, utilize some of the following exercises instead of running, walking, or other exercises that involves both legs.



### Exercise 1: Weight Lifting

If you are using crutches, your arm and shoulder strength is very important. But even if you aren't, it's always a benefit to be physically strong. Keep some small hand weights by the couch and lift them on occasion. You can even use sand bags and lift those with your good leg to keep it ready for anything. Not only is weight lifting great for strength building, but the movement in general is good for recovery. You will loosen up your joints and stimulate your blood flow. Plus, the action can help you stretch and loosen up all over.

### Exercise 2: Core Work Outs

While you have to stay off your leg, no one said anything about ignoring your core. Working your core can be done in the sitting or laying position with ease. When your core is strong, you will have fewer backaches and less other physical issues. You can also stretch your muscles in this manner and feel less stiff in other areas. Keeping your core strong is important to many recovery



elements and it can help you feel more fit and prepared for anything.

### **Exercise 3: Swimming**

If your doctor okays it, you may even be able to swim. If you have a cast, you will either have to wear a cover or get a waterproof, airtight item to go over it. The good part about working out in the water is that you don't put any pressure on your leg and yet you can work out the rest of your body including your lower portion.



### **Exercise 4: Walking**

While you may want to give up running for a while, walking is still okay...as long as you don't use your bum leg. If you are using crutches, walking might be harder than it looks. But it's still a good work out. You should try to get up and move around every hour or two anyway. If you have a modern crutch alternative like an iWALK 2.0 Hands Free Crutch, walking maybe easier and even fun. Use the Knee Scooter allows you to roll around inside and out. It offers more stability and even has a basket to safely carry items from place to place.

### **Exercise 5: Yoga**

While you won't be able to do any downward dog or other difficult moves, yoga is a good way to get your mind and body in tune with one another.



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Do some of the yoga stretches and you will feel balanced and improve your recovery overall.

Working out might be different than before, but it's still possible. You may even discover new things you want to add to your normal regime once you're back up on both legs!

## Physical Therapy Exercises

When you have a leg injury or are recovering from surgery, you may very well be assigned to a physical therapist. That person will help you use your muscles in the correct manner to restore yourself to full mobility throughout the recovery process. Talk with your physical therapist as they will know your condition, restrictions and abilities. Here are a few things you can expect from physical therapy.

### Customized Exercises

You will get a list of customized exercises that your physical therapist wants you to do in order to help your recovery process move along nicely.

### Limitations

Your physical therapist will tell you how much to do each exercise and when to stop. If you feel too much discomfort, talk to your doctor and your plan may need to be modified.



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## Stretches

You will also have a bunch of stretches that include bending and moving to keep your leg and the rest of your body from getting too stiff.

Your physical therapist will push you and if you listen to directions carefully and follow your assignments, you can keep your recovery on track at a nice pace.

## Mental Health

When recovering from an injury or surgery and in the non-weight bearing state, you may focus on how you are doing physically. However, your mental health is just as important if not even more so. Going from two legs and the ability to do anything you want anytime you want to only having one working leg and limitations can be very depressing. The drastic change from your normal routine can be frustrating. There are many things you can do to keep your mental health in check.

## Mental Health Savers

As you look ahead to your recovery, there are a number of things you may want to line up. These ideas can help you save your peace of mind and your sanity as you enter into the non-weight bearing state.



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## 1. Help!!

It is a good idea for you to have help lined up for yourself. You might need help getting dressed for a while. Help preparing food. Help with your kids. Or even running errands. Think about how hard it is to get everything done with two legs beneath you and then subtract one. Lining up that help will allow you to recover in a more stress free manner.

## 2. Company

Part of your recovery will include more rest. You may find yourself on the couch and alone more than is normal for you. At first, you might enjoy it. But after a while, loneliness may settle in. Arrange to have co-workers, family members and neighbors visit you after the first few days of your recovery passes.

## 3. Projects

There are probably a million little projects in your home awaiting your attention. When you get bored of movies and magazines, organize that filing cabinet, the recipe box, the banking drawer and anything else that needs tending. You'll keep your mind busy and off your situation.

## 4. Go Out

Going out is harder than it was before, but that doesn't mean it can't be done. When you start to feel a little blue and sorry for yourself, get some



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fresh air. Even if you just go to the mailbox and back, you're doing something. If you really feel good, wander your local supermarket and grab some healthy snacks.

## **5. Correspond**

Are there family members and friends you've fallen out of contact with? Life gets busy, but it can be great to get back in touch. When you're alone and ready for a friend, reach out by email, phone, or even snail mail. You'll keep your mind occupied and open a new line of communication.

## **6. Laugh**

One of the best things you can do for how you feel is have a good laugh. Read a funny book, look at old high school pictures, watch a movie that always brings the giggles. Find light-hearted amusement and you'll feel better in no time.

## **Safety Elements**

Everyone wants a fast and easy recovery. To stay safe and ensure you recover quickly and easily without endangering yourself, there are many things you will need to take into consideration. Think through these safety elements and get to the other side of your recovery as fast and safe as possible.



## Prepare Your Home

When you return home from surgery or an injury in the non-weight bearing status, you may find a landmine of things that can be of danger to you. Here are a few things you need to do to prepare your home for the recovery process.

### 1. Clean Floors

Make sure all of your floors have a clear path free from rugs, toys, magazines, cords, and anything else that can trip you up.



### 2. Inspect Shower

Ever tried to shower on one leg? It's not easy and it's slippery and dangerous too! Invest in a [shower bench](#) and pick up a few grab bars to make things easier and safer.

### 3. Move Kitchen Items

While you may not be doing all of the cooking, there will be times when you have to do some work. Move the items you use the most to cabinets and drawers you can easily access so you have no need to try to reach for anything.

### 4. Set up a Recovery Station

Decide where you will spend most of your time and set up a little station nearby. Put extra pillows in that area so you can elevate your leg and then



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stock the station with remotes, your laptop, your phone, a notepad, water, healthy snacks and anything else you might want to grab quickly.

## 5. Think Up a Routine

There are going to be a lot of chores that don't get done when you are laid up. Think about what needs to get done and start a list to begin a new routine. Who will do what? When? How? Get everything organized so everyone in the household knows what to do. If you don't have enough help, use this list to ask around for the help you need.

## Mobility Options

Your doctor will likely send you home on crutches and insist that you stay off your injured area for a certain length of time. However, there are other mobility options on the market to consider. Think through the options and decide what is best for you and your situation.

### Crutches

While this option is highly used, it is not always the best mobility device. Crutches are great for short periods of time and they can definitely keep your off your injured leg. However, they can also be cumbersome and hard to maneuver. If you have to stay off your leg for any length of time,



you may want to consider another option.

## Wheelchair

Wheelchairs work well for certain situations, but they can be hard to steer if you don't have someone to push you all of the time. You also have to deal with areas that may not be handicap accessible and it's good to get up and move around as much as possible. Wheelchairs are great for some parts of recovery, but not the entire extent, for the most part.

## Hands Free Crutch

A [Hands Free Crutch](#) can be a wonderful option for someone who does not want to lose the ability to walk unhindered and someone who wants to save the freedom of their hands. Unlike a wheeled device like a knee walker that can not be used on stairs, the hands free crutch can be used on stairs or uneven ground.



## Knee Scooter

The [Knee Scooter](#) (also known as a Knee Walker) requires kneeling. You put your knee on a padded area and scoot yourself from place to place with your good leg on this wheeled device. You hold onto handles at the front to steer, but you can easily hop on and off the device quickly and you can park it and use your hands whenever you



need them. It even comes with a basket in the front to carry keys, phones and anything else you need to have along.

## Seated Scooter

The [Seated Scooter](#) works much like the Knee Scooter only you sit and scoot instead of kneeling. This device is great for those who can not comfortably kneel due to an injury to their knee or can not bend their knee due to a brace. You have a seat with you anywhere you go and you still have the basket on the front to take items along as well.

## Combinations

You don't have to use just one device throughout the extent of your recovery. You can choose two or even more. For example, if you prefer the Knee Scooter at work because you have to go up and down the hall a lot and in and out of offices quickly, you might prefer crutches at home when you don't have to go very far to get to the fridge. You might use the Hands Free Crutch for the majority of your recovery, but a wheelchair for special events that cause too much walking and exhaustion. Examine the options and pick one or more devices to help you through the recovery process.

What assistance product  
is best for you?

**Find your best  
option to crutches.**

**TAKE THE QUIZ**



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Connect with others  
recovering on one foot

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## Stay Fit, Stay Safe

Recovery is not an overnight event. It is a process. Your recovery should be taken seriously and in stride. While it is hard to make these adjustments, once you have the surgery or receive the injury, you don't have a choice but to recover. This guide was meant to help you stay as fit and as safe as possible. Good luck with all of the details. You can do it! And on the other side, you'll have both legs beneath you to prove it.



**Keep your eye on the prize**

**Focus on your goal of healing  
completely and quickly**



**Did you get all of your questions answered?**

As we get feedback we continue to add and clarify the guide so that you can get the most accurate and helpful information

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