

How to Walk with Hip Pain using a Cane, or Walker

We often suggest use of a walking aid when any of the following conditions are true:

1. You are at a high risk for falling due to painful or weak hips or knees.
2. You experience significant pain when weight bearing on the painful hip.
3. You are walking with a significant limp or you tend to waddle.



We want you to keep in mind our suggestion for using an aid to walk does not have to be a permanent thing. During the time you are using the support aid, we are hoping three things will occur:

1. Your hip pain will begin to calm down. Any hip inflammation or swelling you have may subside. If your hip pain is due to arthritis, we often find that arthritic pain can be cyclical (flare up and calm down).
2. We hope you will participate in our hip stretching program which often leads to decreased pain. See our video [Bob & Brad Hip Stretching Video \(Based on the McKenzie Approach\)](#)
3. We hope you will participate in our hip strengthening program which also can lead to decreased pain. See our video [How to Strengthen a Painful Hip](#).

How to use a Cane:

The cane is often most effective when used in the hand on the opposite side of the hip pain. So, if your hip pain is in your right hip, you would use the cane in your left hand. We typically advise our patients to just begin walking and using

the cane without instruction. Most patients take to using a cane naturally and any instructions on our part tends to screw them up.

The recommended cane height should be set as follows:

- A. Stand up straight.
- B. Let the support arm hang by your side.



- C. Adjust the support cane so the cane handle hits the support arm at the level of the wrist (approximately).
- D. When grasping the cane there should be a slight bend at the elbow.

How to use a walker:

When we recommend the use of a walker, we often recommend either a front wheeled walker (with tennis balls on the back) or a 4 wheeled walker. If you use a walker without wheels you will need to lift the walker to advance it while walking. While lifting the walker you will be placing increased weight on a painful or weak hip. Thus, you have more difficulty in trying to get any hip pain to calm down. You are also more likely to lose your balance and fall when lifting the walker. With a wheeled walker you can advance it by rolling it forward. And a front wheeled walker it is still stable, and unlikely to roll away from you.

The recommended walker height should be set as follows:

- E. Stand up straight.
- F. Let the support arms hang by your side.



- G. Adjust the walker height so the hand grips of the walker so the cane handle hit the support arms at the level of the wrists (approximately).
- H. When grasping the walker there should be a slight bend at each elbow.

