Walking sticks (canes) come in a variety of styles, based around two main types, adjustable and non-adjustable. A non-adjustable walking stick is usually the older style timber walking stick with a crook or curved handle. Adjustable walking sticks as the name implies are adjustable and are available with a wide range of handle types and styles. These include t-shaped, offset, crook, swan neck and ergonomic which are designed to relieve pressure on the palm. Four point sticks, known as quad sticks, provide a wider base of support giving more stability.

How to correctly measure the height for your walking stick

It’s very important to have the walking stick at the correct height for use. If the height is incorrect then the support will not be adequate, or may cause discomfort. For example, if the walking stick is too high, this will result in you raising (elevating) your shoulders, therefore reducing your balance and comfort.

The most effective method of checking the height is to stand in your regular footwear with your arms hanging relaxed with a slight natural bend at the elbow (flexed at 15 degrees). Have someone measure the distance between the wrist crease and the ground and set the height of the walking stick to this distance.

Over time your height measurements and posture will change so if it has been several years since you were provided with your stick you should check that it is still a suitable height for you. However, do not significantly change the height of a walking stick that someone has had for some time as they will have got used to it and there may be a reason why the stick length was chosen (e.g. sometimes stick length is adjusted for individuals who have had a stroke). Remember that these are general guidelines and that there may be reasons why you require a different height so check with a health care professional.

How to use a Walking Stick

Walking sticks are usually used on the unaffected or strongest side of the body (the good leg) but this may depend on individual preferences and abilities. When walking with the stick, it should be placed forward at the same time as the affected leg and then the good leg follows.

To climb a step, lift and place the good leg first then the stick and affected leg onto the step. To go down a step the affected leg and stick should be lowered first followed by the good leg. When purchasing a walking stick from Vital Living, we will adjust it to your individual needs. We also stock a range of styles and sizes of stick tips both as options and spares.

Call us now to see how we can be of further assistance, including obligation free trials at home.