

Purpose

Quad canes are designed to give the user additional stability compared to a regular single-point cane. A quad cane is free-standing and when properly used can provide added stability and assistance to an individual while walking. Quad canes are not designed to support the full weight of the user. Your physician or therapist has ordered your quad cane for a specific reason. If your physician or therapist has given you specific instructions, follow them. If you have not seen a therapist or physician, we recommend that you do so.

Types

Quad canes are canes that have a rectangular base with four ground contact points. The types of quad canes refer to the size of the rectangular base: small and large. The small base is for individuals who require less stability assistance than the larger base. Because the large base model will not fit completely on steps, individuals using large base quad canes should not negotiate stairs. Make sure you read and understand all manufacturers' operating instructions.

All quad canes have a maximum weight limit that they can support. It is important to understand the limits and capacities for your quad cane:

Weight of user (stated by user) is _____ pounds.
Maximum weight capacity of quad cane is _____ pounds.

Use

A properly fitted quad cane is adjusted for height when wearing the shoes you will be wearing while using the quad cane. The handgrip should be approximately at the hip joint and the elbows will be slightly bent (20 - 30 degree angle). Quad canes need to be adjusted for right- or left-hand use. Make sure all adjustable-height quad canes have tight connections and/or fully engaged spring buttons. Your physician or therapist may determine different quad cane adjustments and uses from those described in this educational sheet.

The quad cane is held in the non-affected or good hand. Stand with your legs slightly apart and the non-affected leg slightly behind the affected leg. The quad cane should be placed approximately 12 inches in front and on the side of the non-affected leg. Your first step is with the non-affected leg. Then the weak or affected leg moves forward while the quad cane is firmly held to the floor. Your physician or therapist may specify changes to this basic technique. When using a quad cane the base needs to be turned so that the narrow or flush side is faced toward the body. Never negotiate stairs without consulting your physician or therapist.

When utilizing your quad cane for assistance in standing from a seated position, both feet should be firmly planted on the floor. The quad cane must be in your proper hand. Push up on the armrest to a standing position.

Safety

The safe use of a quad cane requires it to be used as instructed, which includes the following safety precautions:

- Check the security of the handgrip.
- Ensure that all snap buttons protrude through the adjusting holes.
- Ensure that the locking collars are tight.
- Ensure that all four legs are in contact with the walking surface.
- Do not go up or down steps without approval from your physician or therapist.

If the quad-cane is to be used in environments that are above 100° F (32° C) or have high humidity or conditions that will cause the quad-cane to get wet, the operator must ensure that the handgrip is secure; these types of environments may cause the handgrips to twist. Always use caution when using a quad-cane on any wet or icy surface.

In order to ensure care and provide operator safety, make sure you follow these safety guidelines:

- Use nightlights to increase vision around areas of use.
- Wipe up any water or slippery floor spills.
- Remove tripping hazards (loose floorboards, uneven floors, throw rugs, extension cords, clutter, etc.)
- Install grab bars, use bath mats with suction cups, and use an elevated toilet seat to prevent falls.
- Do not use a cane when taking any medications that may cause dizziness, drowsiness, and/or unsteadiness.

Maintenance

The handgrip is very important and you should inspect it regularly. Worn or damaged handgrips or quad cane tips must be replaced immediately. The handgrip should also be checked for movement or slippage on a regular basis and replaced if damaged. Ensure that the snap buttons release and engage properly and ensure that any locking collars fully lock the quad cane from moving.