

CRUTCHREVIEWS.COM

# The Complete Forearm Crutch Buyer's Guide

---

The 7 things that actually matter when you'll use crutches every day, how to size a pair to your body, and exactly how we score every model we review.

## START HERE

# Most people buy the wrong crutches first

Then they live with sore hands, slipping cuffs, and a height that was never set right. This guide fixes that before you spend a dollar.

Forearm crutches (also called Canadian or elbow crutches) are built for people who will be on them for weeks, months, or for good, not just a few days. Done right, they move the load off your armpits and into a setup your wrists and shoulders can tolerate all day. Done wrong, they punish you for every step.

## Forearm vs. underarm: which one are you actually shopping for?

	Forearm (Canadian)	Underarm (axillary)
<b>Best for</b>	Long-term and daily use, active users	Short-term recovery (a few weeks)
<b>Load goes to</b>	Hands and forearms (cuff shares the load)	Hands, braced under the arms
<b>Learning curve</b>	Higher at first, easier long-term	Lower at first
<b>Watch out for</b>	Wrist strain if grips and height are wrong	Nerve pressure if you lean on the underarm pads

### Rule of thumb

If you'll use crutches longer than a month, or you're active on them, forearm crutches are almost always the better long-term choice. This guide focuses on getting a forearm pair right.

# The 7 things that actually matter

Ignore the marketing. These are the seven factors that decide whether a pair works for your body and your day.

## 1 Cuff design and fit

The forearm cuff carries real load and keeps the crutch with you when you reach for a door. Open cuffs are easy to get in and out of; closed or hinged cuffs hold more securely. The cuff should sit 1 to 1.5 inches below your elbow and grip the widest part of your forearm without pinching.

## 2 Grip and handle ergonomics

This is where pain shows up first. Look for a contoured or angled handle that keeps your wrist neutral instead of bent back. Softer, wider grips spread pressure across your palm. If you have arthritis or carpal tunnel, this factor outranks almost everything else.

## 3 Sizing and height range

A crutch that doesn't fit your height will never feel right, no matter how good it is. Check the stated height range against your own (we cover how to measure on the next page). Taller and shorter users should confirm the model comes in the right size or adjusts far enough.

## 4 Weight and portability

You carry these all day. A pair that's half a pound lighter each is a different experience by evening. Aluminum is the standard; carbon fiber is noticeably lighter and pricier. If you travel or take transit, folding models pack down for a bag or a car footwell.

## 5 Durability and weight capacity

Check the rated weight capacity and confirm it clears your body weight with margin, especially if you put your full weight on the crutches. Daily users wear out tips, grips, and joints faster than occasional users, so look for replaceable tips and solid hardware.

## 6 Adjustability

More height settings and (on some models) an adjustable forearm section mean a closer fit to your body. If more than one person will use them, or you're buying for someone who's still growing or recovering, adjustability matters more.

## 7 Value, and whether insurance covers it

The cheapest pair is rarely the best value if it leaves your hands sore. But you may not be paying full price at all. Forearm crutches fall under HCPCS code **E0110**, which many insurance plans and Medicare cover as durable medical equipment with a prescription. Ask your provider for a prescription and check your plan before paying out of pocket.

### Quick win

Veterans and anyone with DME coverage: get the E0110 prescription first. It can turn a \$100+ purchase into a covered benefit, and it changes which models are worth considering.

## The fast version

If you only remember three things: get the **height right**, prioritize the **grip** if you'll be on them daily, and confirm the **weight capacity** with margin. Everything else is refinement on top of those.

# How to size forearm crutches

Three measurements decide whether a crutch fits. Do this in the shoes you'll actually wear, standing up straight.

## 1. Handle height

Stand tall with arms relaxed at your sides. The handgrip should sit at the crease of your wrist. When you hold it, your elbow should bend about 15 to 30 degrees. Too high and you'll hunch; too low and you'll lean and strain your wrists.

## 2. Cuff position

The forearm cuff should sit 1 to 1.5 inches below the bend of your elbow, around the widest part of your forearm. It should stay put when you lift your hand off the grip, without squeezing.

## 3. Overall height range

Match your height to the model's stated range before you buy. Use the guide below as a starting point, then fine-tune with the handle-height check above.

Your height	What to look for
Under 5'2"	A short-size model or one that adjusts low enough; many standard adult crutches won't go short enough.
5'2" to 6'0"	Most standard adult forearm crutches will fit; focus on grip and cuff comfort.
Over 6'2"	Confirm a tall size or a high maximum height; check weight capacity too.

### Don't skip this

A great crutch set to the wrong height feels worse than an average crutch set correctly. Spend five minutes on the fit before you judge any pair.

## NARROW IT DOWN

# Pick by your situation

The right crutch depends on why you need it. Find yourself below, then see our current top pick for that case on the site.

### **Post-surgery recovery (weeks to a few months)**

Prioritize comfort and shock absorption over long-term durability. You want something easy to get on and off and gentle on your hands while you heal.

### **Long-term, every-day use**

Comfort and durability win. Spend the most attention on grip ergonomics and cuff fit, and consider a lighter frame since you'll carry the weight all day.

### **Veterans and anyone with DME coverage**

Start with the E0110 prescription so insurance can cover it. With coverage in hand, you can choose on fit and comfort instead of price.

### **Buying for a parent or someone you care for**

Favor stability, simple adjustment, and a secure cuff. Easy height settings matter when you're fitting them for someone else.

### **On a tight budget**

A solid aluminum pair covers the basics well. Just don't compromise on the grip or the correct height; those are what make a budget pair livable.

## **See our current top picks for your situation**

We score every model on a 5-part rubric and update picks as we research new ones. Take the 60-second fit quiz, or read the full roundup.

[crutchreviews.com/quiz](https://crutchreviews.com/quiz) · [crutchreviews.com/best-forearm-crutches](https://crutchreviews.com/best-forearm-crutches)

## WHY YOU CAN TRUST THE PICKS

# How we score every crutch

Word of mouth and star ratings don't tell you whether a crutch fits *your* body and your day. So we score every model we review on the same five-part Fit Score rubric, each rated 0 to 10, then averaged.

<b>Comfort</b>	Grip ergonomics, cuff feel, and how it treats your wrists and shoulders over a full day.
<b>Durability</b>	Frame, hardware, and wear parts, and how they hold up under daily use.
<b>Portability</b>	Weight in hand and whether it folds or packs down to travel.
<b>Adjustability</b>	How many height settings, and how well it fits a range of bodies.
<b>Value</b>	What you get for the price, including coverage potential under E0110.

Scores are independent editorial judgments based on documented specs and characteristics, not paid placements. When we link to a retailer and you buy, we may earn a commission. That never changes a score or a pick.

## Your free guide is just the start

Compare models head to head, read full reviews, and find the pair that fits you at:

[crutchreviews.com](https://crutchreviews.com)

---

**Medical disclaimer:** This guide is general education, not medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Crutch type, fit, and use should be confirmed with your doctor or physical therapist.

**Affiliate disclosure:** CrutchReviews.com participates in affiliate programs, including the Amazon Associates Program, and may earn commissions from qualifying purchases made through links on our website. This does not affect our scores or recommendations.

© 2026 CrutchReviews.com. Published by Millennial Medical Equipment LLC. All product names and brands are the property of their respective owners.