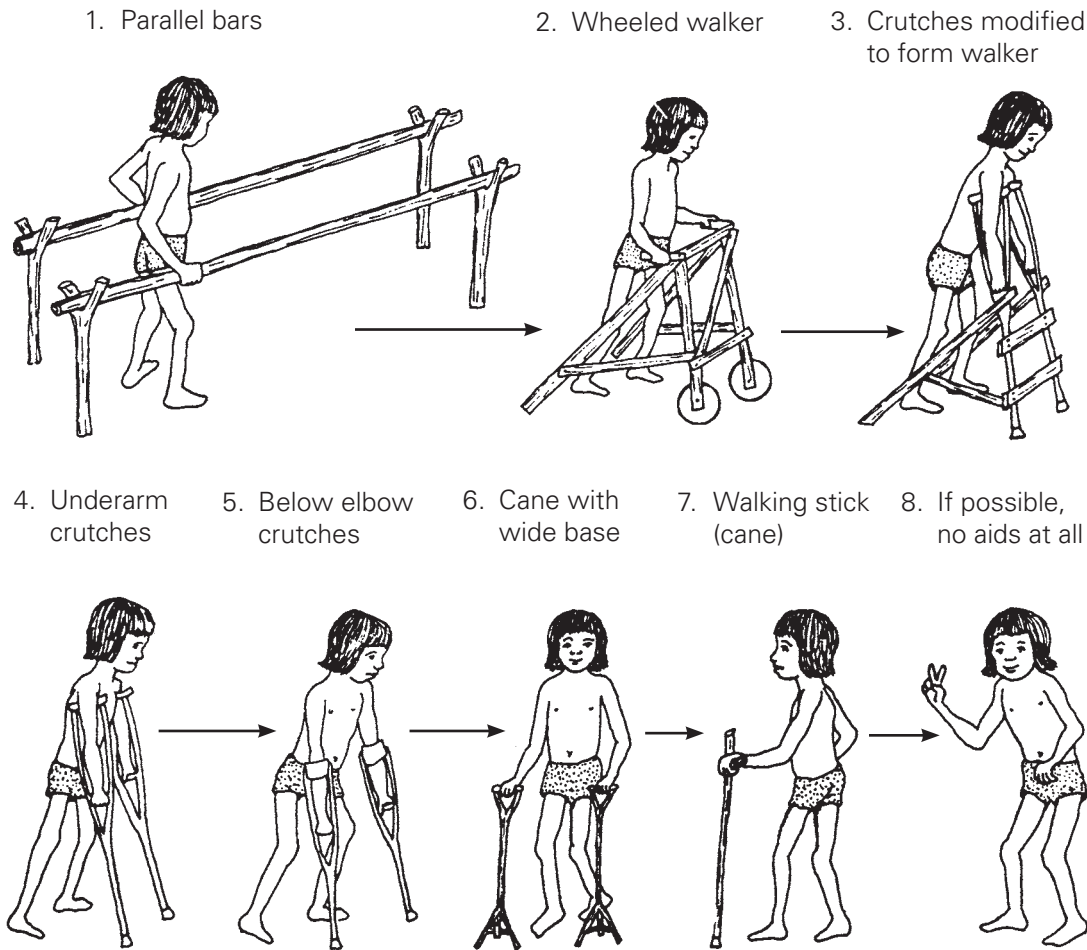


# Walking Aids

In designing aids for a child, we need to think not only about her type and amount of *disability*, but also the stage of progress she is at. For learning to walk, she may progress through a series of stages and aids. Here is an example:



In this chapter we show a variety of aids for walking. Most can be made easily out of tree branches or wood. Some can be made from building construction bars (reinforcing rod) or metal tubing, and may require welding.

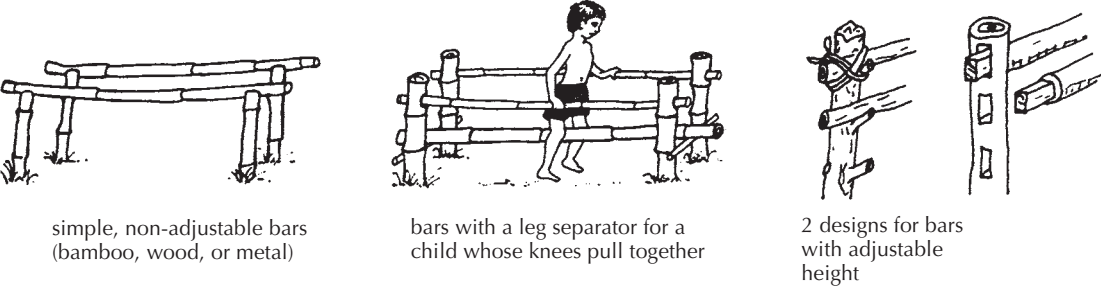
We include these ideas not to ask you to copy them, but with the hope that they will 'trigger' your imagination. Take ideas from these designs, and use the materials you have at hand. When possible, make your aids to meet the needs of the individual child.

At a village *rehabilitation center*, it helps to have a wide selection of aids on hand, so that you can try different ones on a particular child to find out what works and what she likes best.

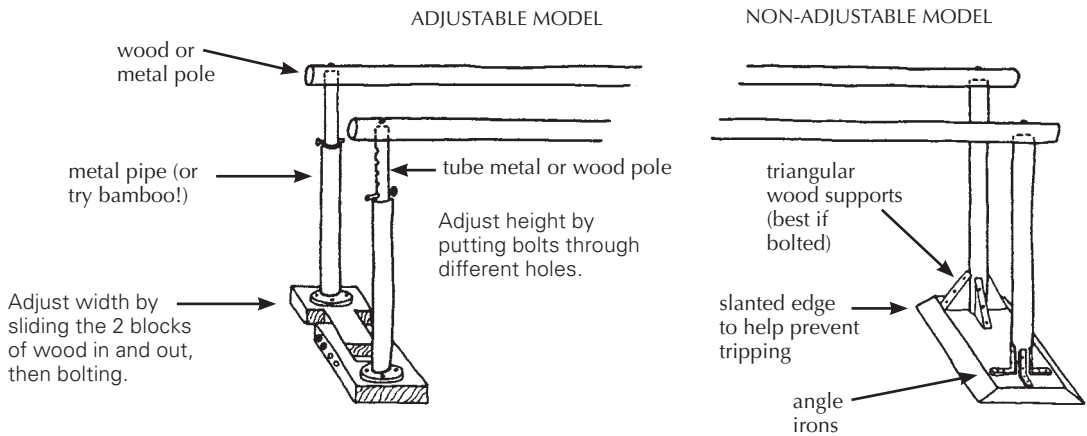
Parallel bars

Simple designs for outdoor parallel bars, both adjustable and non-adjustable, are included in Chapter 46 on playgrounds, p. 417 and 425. On p. 417 we also give suggestions for adjusting the bar height to meet the needs of the individual child. The designs shown are:

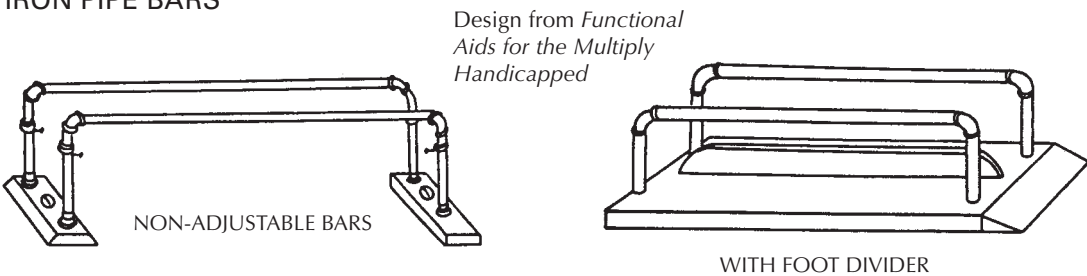
OUTDOOR BARS



INDOOR BARS (design details for two of several models)



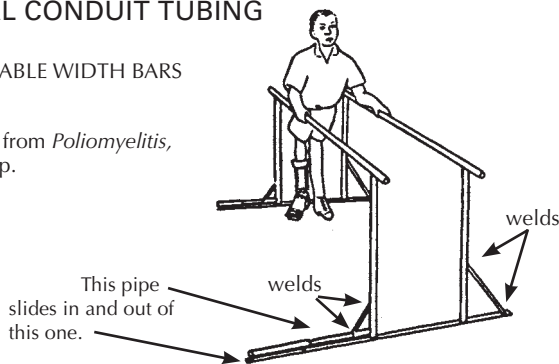
IRON PIPE BARS



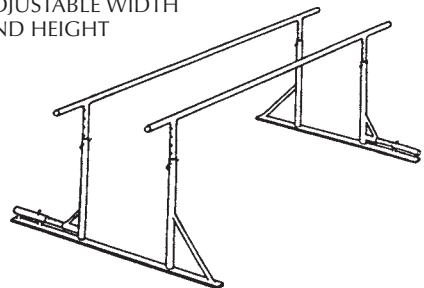
METAL CONDUIT TUBING

ADJUSTABLE WIDTH BARS

Designs from *Poliomyelitis,  
Huckstep*.



ADJUSTABLE WIDTH  
AND HEIGHT

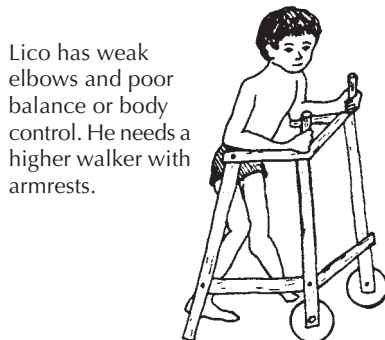


## Walkers

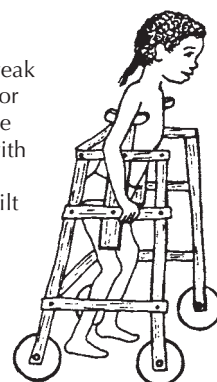
There are many ways to make walkers or walking frames. Here we show a range from very simple to more complex. Choose the design and height depending on the child's needs and size.



Julio has strong arms and good body control. He can use a simple low walker.

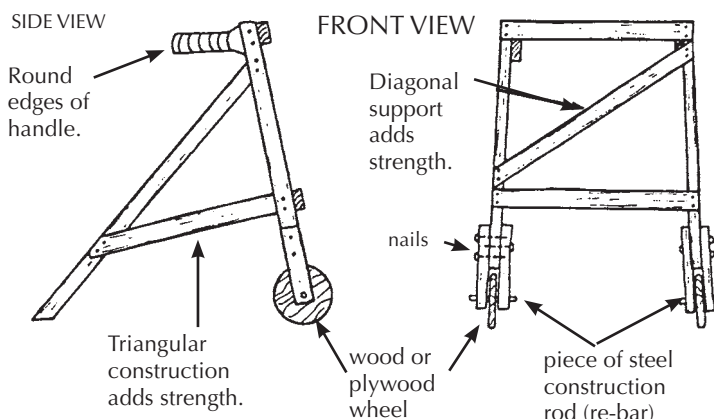


Lico has weak elbows and poor balance or body control. He needs a higher walker with armrests.



Anna has weak legs and poor balance. She does best with underarm crutches built into the walker.

The above walkers can be made with 2 cm. x 4 cm. boards (such as those used on roofs to hold tiles), or thin trees or branches. The wood or plywood wheels roll easily when little weight is on them (when child pushes walker) but have a braking action when child puts full weight on them (when taking a step).

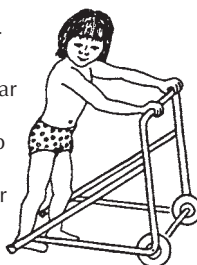


Finding the design that works best for a particular child often involves experimenting and changing different features.

For example, Carlota has poor body and hip control, and tends to 'fall through' the space between her arms when the handgrips are upright.



A higher walker with a bar as the handgrip works better for her.



This walker with slanting bars lets a child hold it at the height that he finds works best.

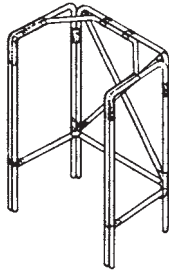
These walkers can be made out of welded or bolted metal tubing.

CP

Other walker designs

WALKER MADE FROM CANE, RATTAN, OR BAMBOO

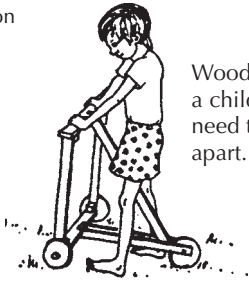
Design from *Rattan and Bamboo Equipment For Handicapped Children*, J. K. Hutt.



Joints can be tied with cane, ribbon, nylon string, strips of car inner tube or whatever.


WOOD WALKER

Design by Don Caston.




Wood walker for a child whose legs need to be held apart.

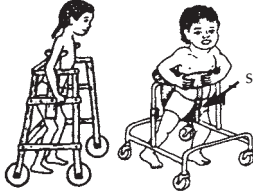
**Note:** A walker with no wheels is very stable but harder to move.




A walker with 2 wheels and 2 posts is fairly stable but easy to move.



A walker with 3 or 4 wheels is very easy to move but can easily roll out from under the child (unless the child is seated).



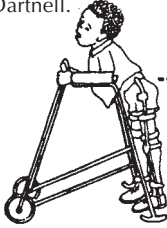
seat



WALKER MADE FROM SOLID IRON ROD (RE-BAR) WITH ARMRESTS—WELDING REQUIRED

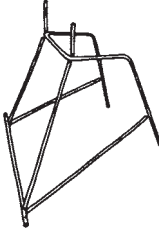
Design from *Simple Prosthesis Manufacture*, Chris Dartnell.

Measure child.

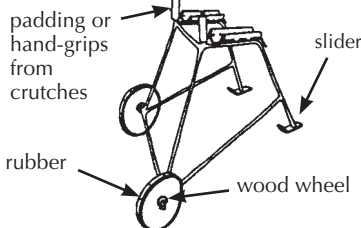


elbow height

Cut and bend rod.

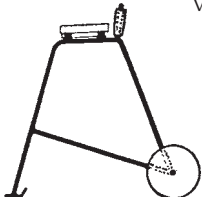


Assemble walker.

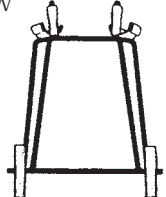


padding or hand-grips from crutches  
slider  
rubber  
wood wheel

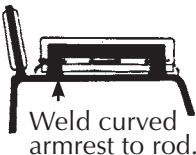
SIDE VIEW



FRONT VIEW




ARMREST



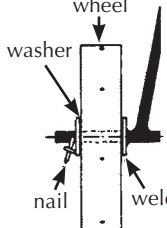
Weld curved armrest to rod.

width of forearm



angled toward body  
80°  
leather, cardboard, plastic, or sponge

washer

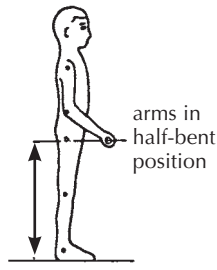


wheel  
nail  
weld

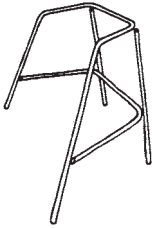
SIMPLE WALKER MADE FROM SOLID IRON ROD (RE-BAR)—WELDING REQUIRED

Design from *Simple Prosthesis Manufacture*, Chris Dartnell.

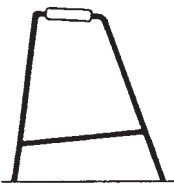
arms in half-bent position



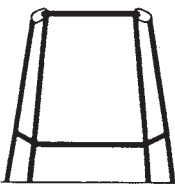
Cut and weld rod.



SIDE VIEW



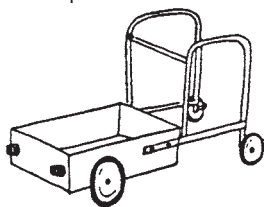
FRONT VIEW



## CART WALKERS

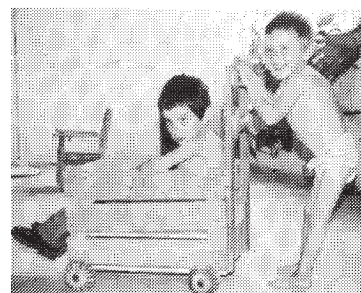


Design from *Handling the Young Cerebral Palsied Child at Home*, Finnie (see p. 638).



The added weight in the cart can help the child stand firmly—and makes learning to walk more fun.

As the child progresses, he can change his grip from the front bar to the side bars.



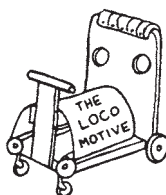
Wheels on this cart walker are made from the round seed pods of a tree in Mexico, called Hava de San Ignacio.

CP

## ROLLER SEAT AND TRICYCLE WALKERS



Useful for a child with cerebral palsy who 'bunny hops' (crawls pulling both legs forward together). Seat holds legs apart. The 'chimney' helps child keep his arms up and apart.



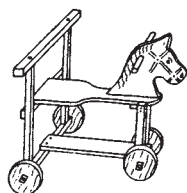
Stable for the beginner



Design from *Handling the Young Cerebral Palsied Child at Home*, Finnie (see p. 638).

CP

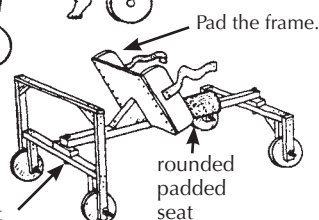
## WALKERS FOR SITTING AND STANDING



## SPIDER WALKER



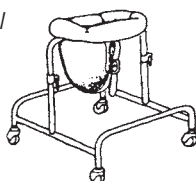
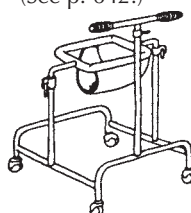
Useful for the small child severely affected by cerebral palsy.



CP

## SADDLE-TYPE WALKER

Design from *UPKARAN Manual* (See p. 642.)

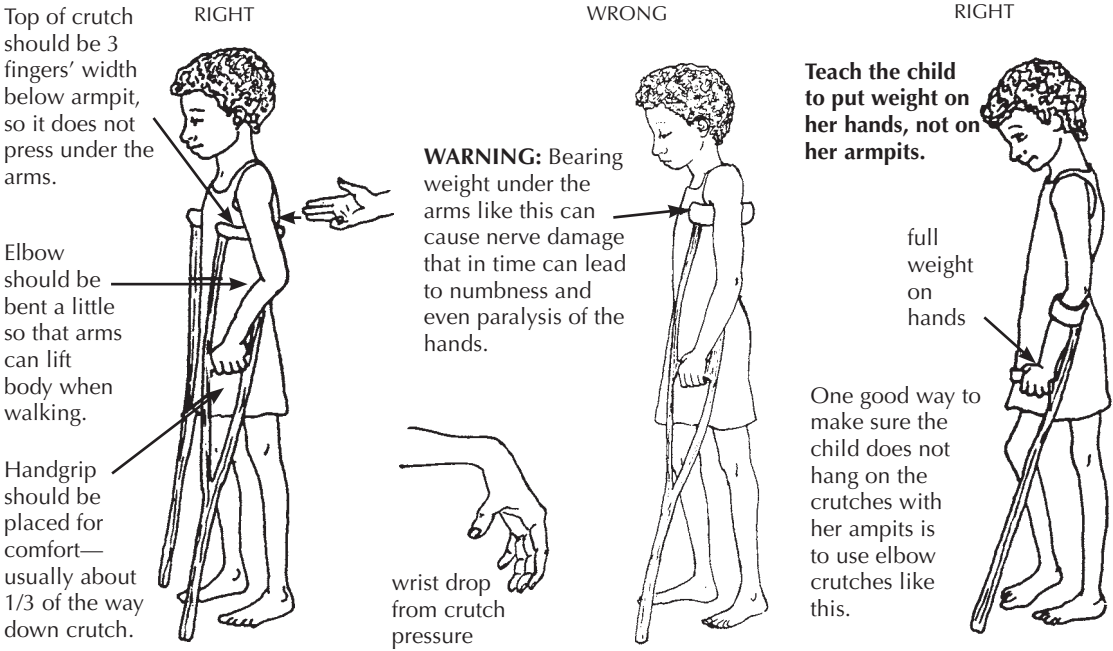


**CAUTION:** Sitting walkers should usually be used, if at all, as an early and temporary step toward walking. With them, the child does not learn to balance well and the hips are often at an angle which can form *contractures* (see Chapter 8, p. 86).



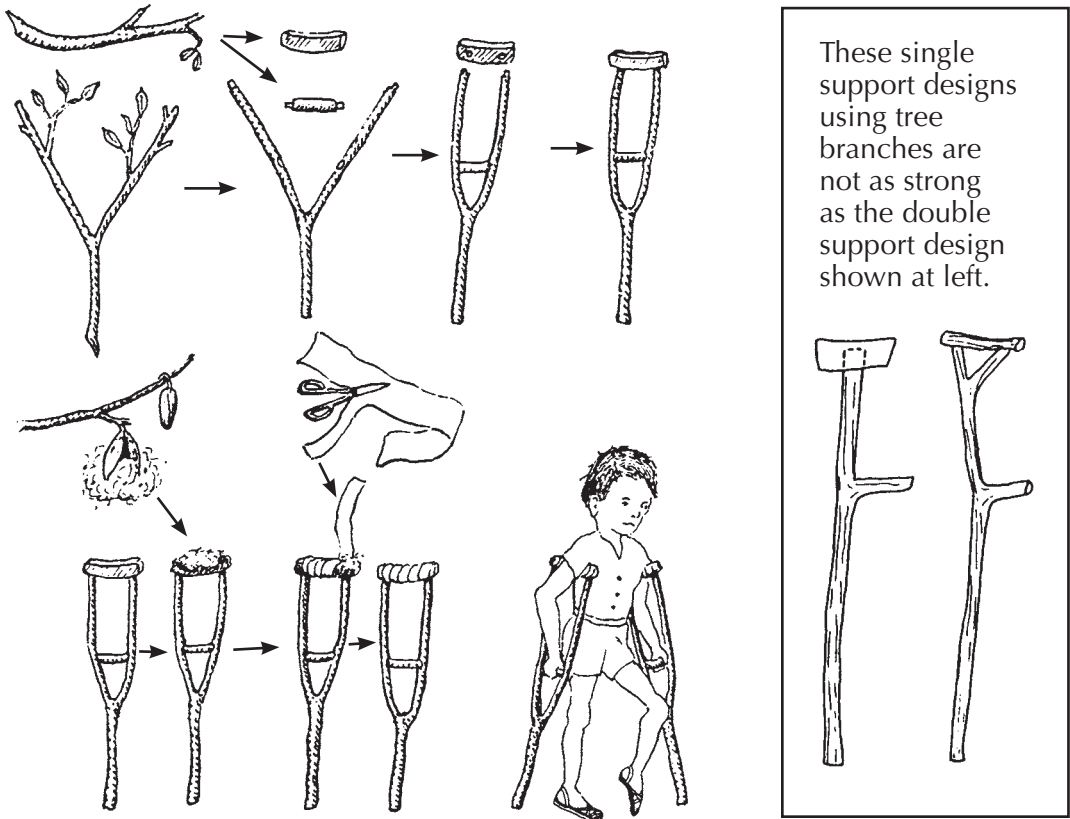
# Crutches

## MEASUREMENTS FOR UNDERARM CRUTCH

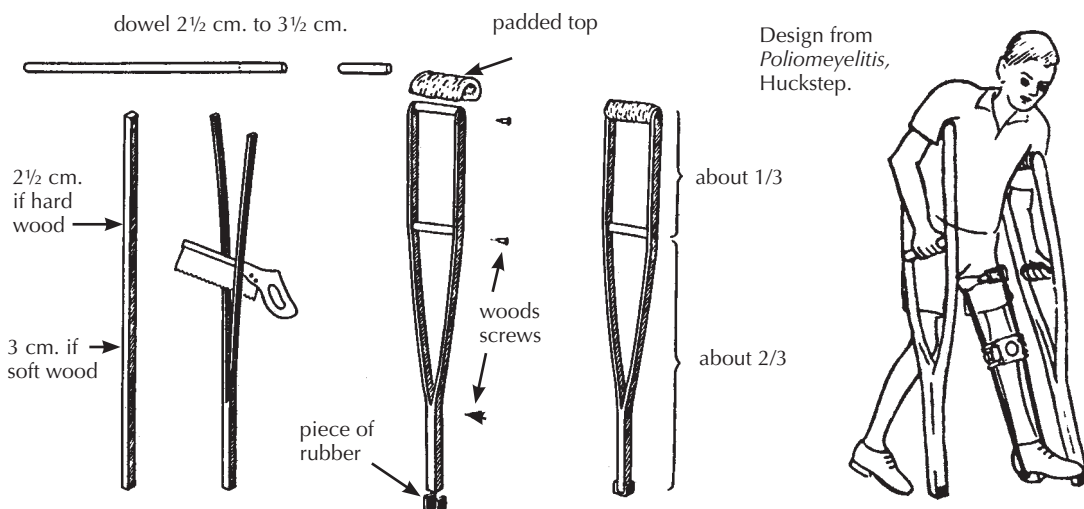


There are many designs for underarm crutches. Here we show a few.

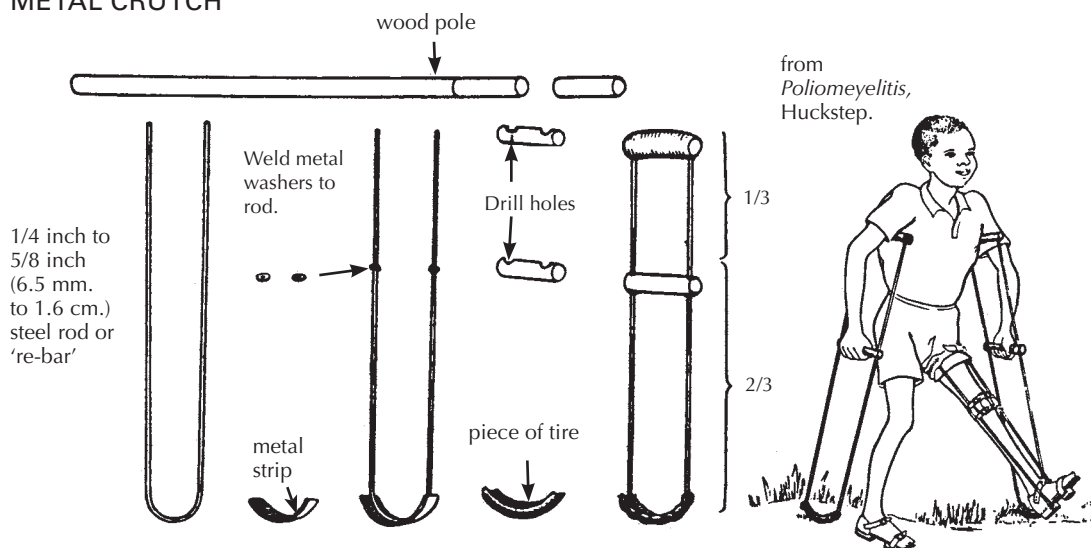
### CRUTCHES FROM TREE BRANCHES, padded with wild kapok



# WOODEN CRUTCHES

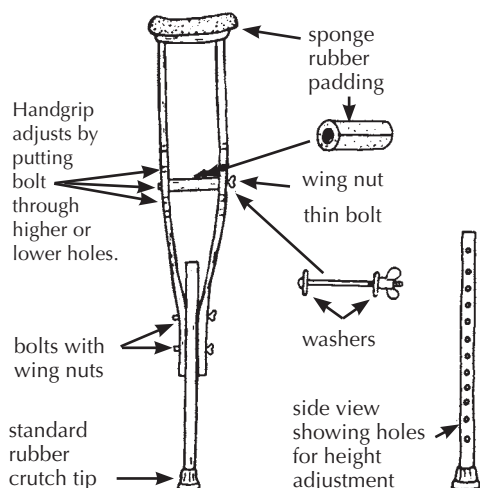


# METAL CRUTCH

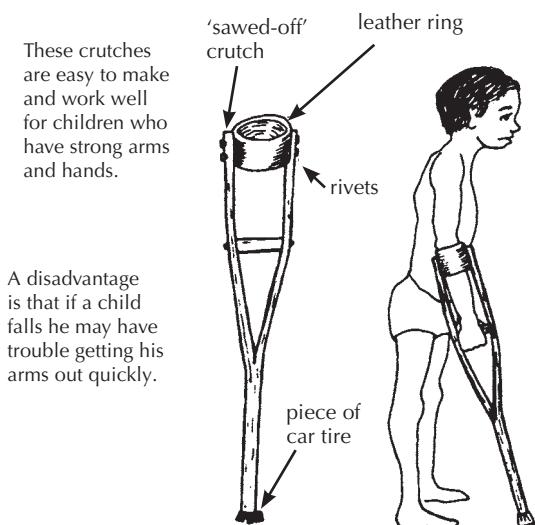


# ADJUSTABLE WOOD CRUTCH

## STANDARD



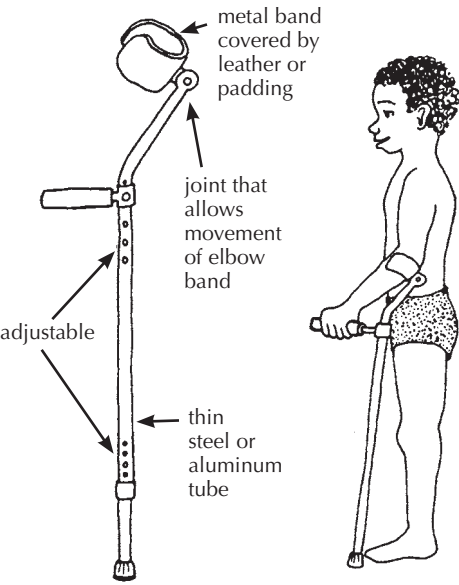
# LEATHER RING ELBOW CRUTCH



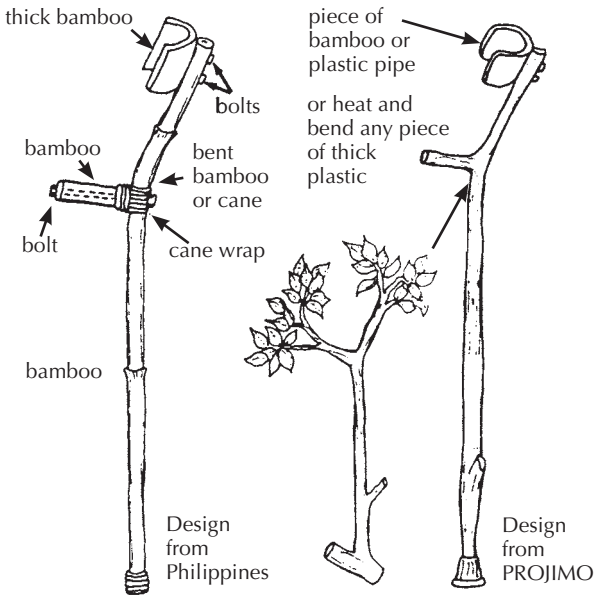
OTHER ELBOW CRUTCHES

With these open elbow-ring crutches, the child can easily get his arms out if he falls.

STANDARD ADJUSTABLE



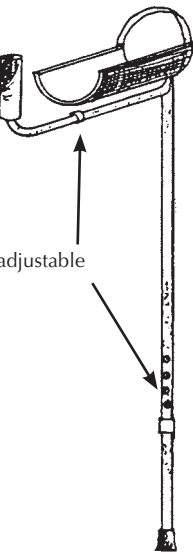
USING LOCAL RESOURCES



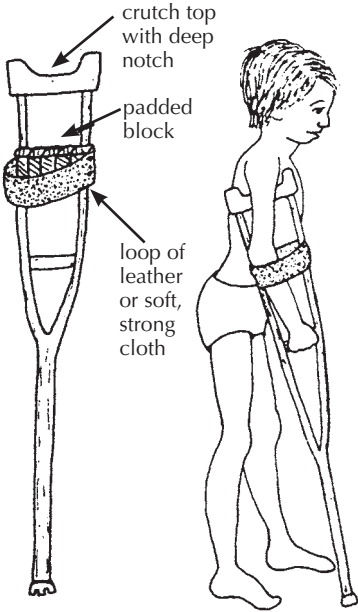
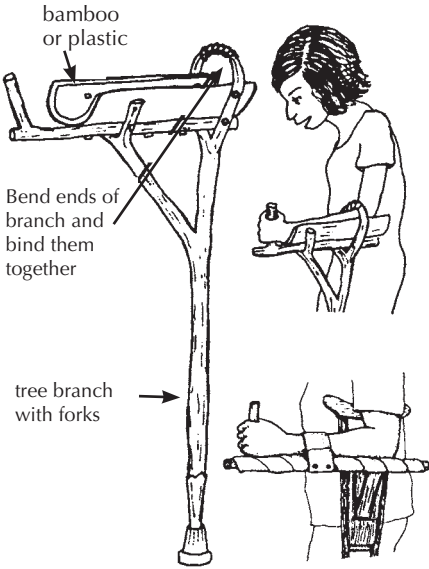
**Gutter crutch** ('arthritis crutch')  
For children who, due to elbow pain or stiffness, cannot use straight-arm crutches.

**Crutch for a child with weak elbow-straightening muscles.**

STANDARD



USING LOCAL RESOURCES



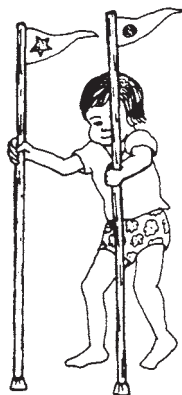
These are only examples. Once you get the idea, you can invent your own. A lot of experimentation is often needed to adapt crutches for children with severe arthritis.



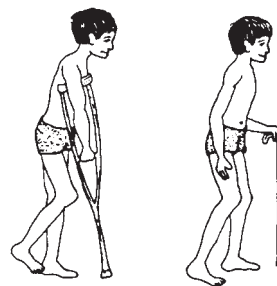
## Canes and walking sticks

**Straight poles** can help a child with balance problems.

**CAUTION:** Use poles that are taller than child so if she falls, they will not poke her eyes.

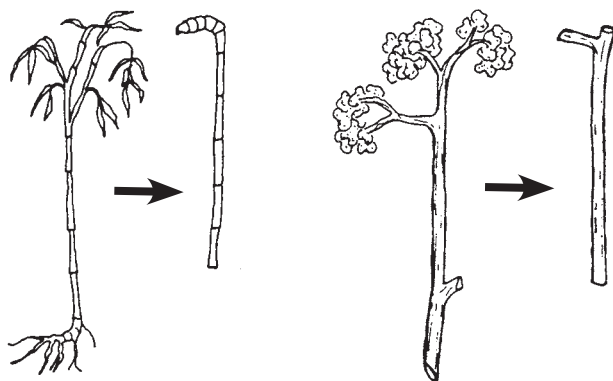


**Canes.** Simple canes provide some balance and support, but the child has to use the walking muscles in both legs.

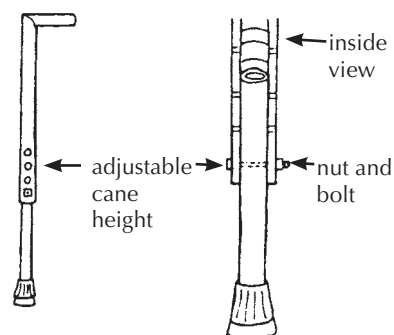


For the child who needs to strengthen a weak or painful leg, a cane makes him use his leg. A crutch lets him avoid using his leg, so the muscles that bend his leg get stronger, rather than the ones that straighten it. (See p. 526.)

### CANES CUT FROM FOREST PLANTS

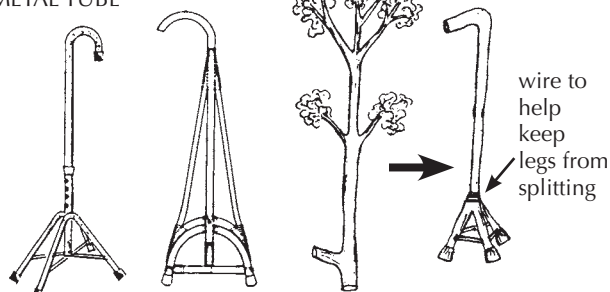


### ADJUSTABLE METAL TUBE CANE

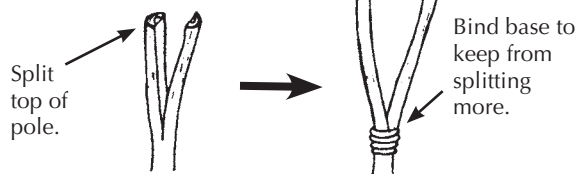


### 3 OR 4 FOOTED CANE—FOR GREATER STABILITY

STANDARD METAL TUBE

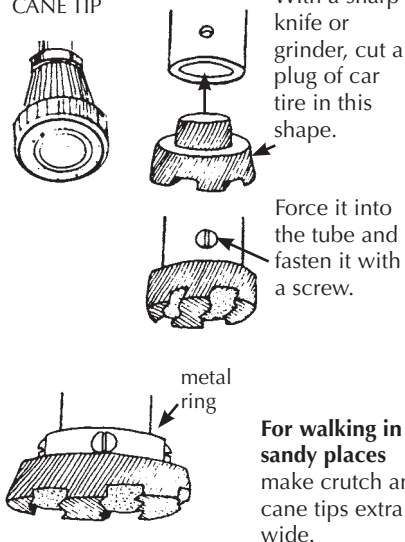


ALTERNATIVE HAND GRIP



### Rubber tip made from car tire for metal tube or bamboo crutch or cane

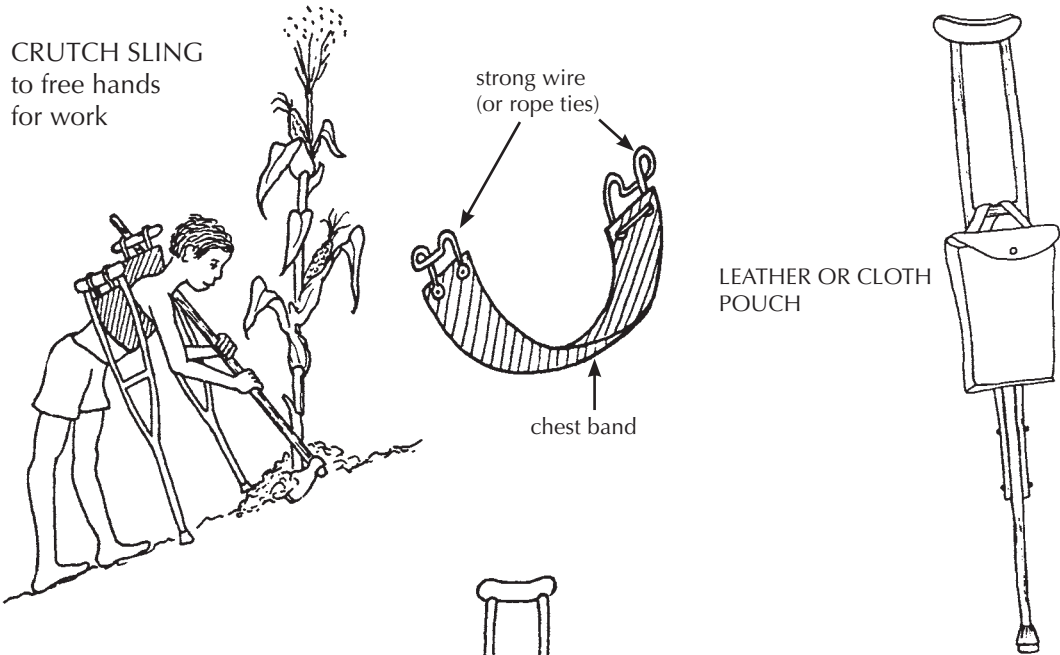
STANDARD CRUTCH AND CANE TIP



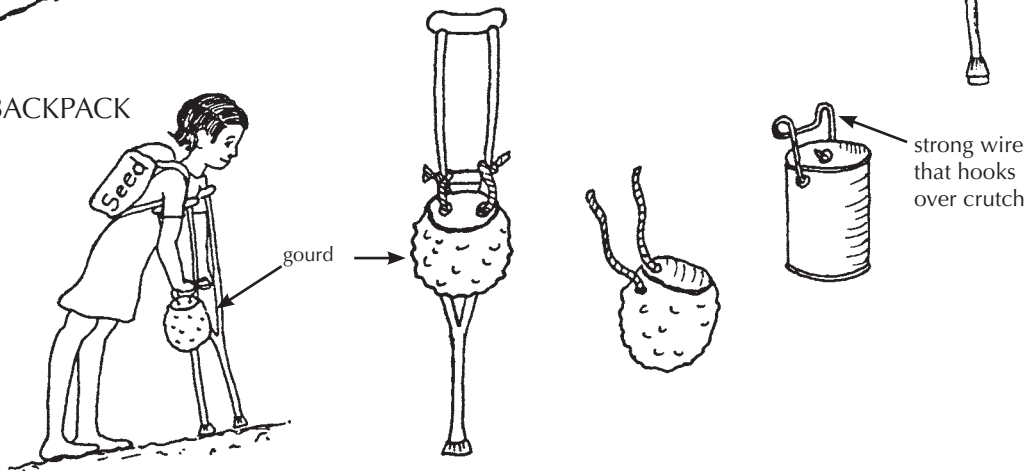
For walking in sandy places make crutch and cane tips extra wide.

Adaptations of walking aids for carrying things and for work

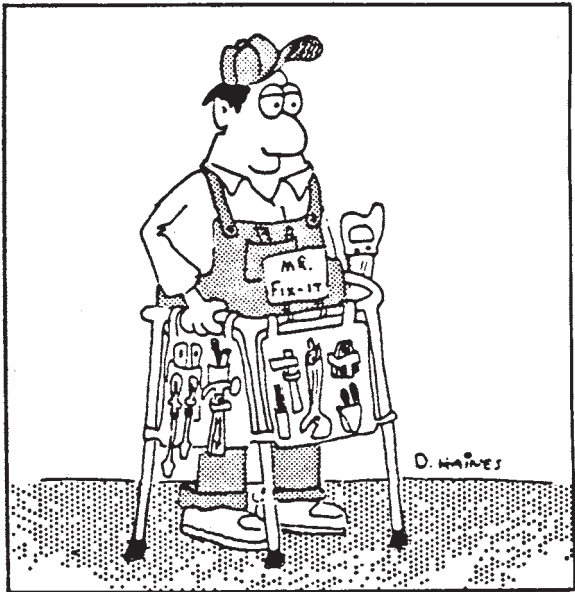
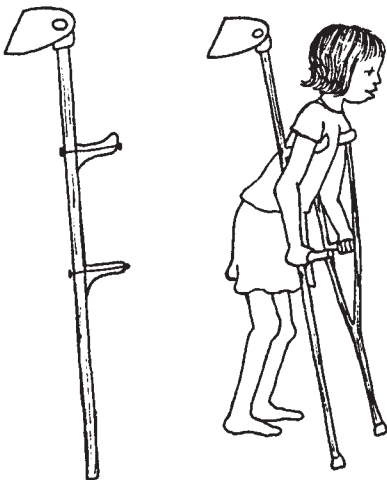
CRUTCH SLING  
to free hands  
for work



BACKPACK



HOE ADAPTED AS CRUTCH



Reprinted from *Accent on Living*, 1984