&WALK 2.0 Hands-Free Crutch 2.0 FAQ

How long will my iWALK 2.0 crutch last?

Answer: Nothing lasts forever, but your iWALKFree will last a long, long time…probably much longer than the time you will need to recover. The most common things to wear out are the knee platform pad, the thigh saddle pads or the rubber foot tread.

Can I wear different shoes with my iWALK 2.0 crutch?

Answer: Yes! But if the height difference is more than ½ inch, you’ll want to adjust the height of the knee platform and the thigh straps. Luckily we’ve thought of this, so it’s quick and easy to make height adjustments.

Can I wear short pants with the iWALK 2.0 Crutch?

Answer: Yes. The special padding used on your iWALK 2.0 is hypoallergenic and FDA and CE approved to come in contact with your skin.

Can I sit down wearing the iWALK 2.0 Crutch?

Answer: Yes, but you’ll need ample space in front of your chair for the beam below your knee to extend. If this is an issue, we’ve designed iWALK 2.0 to be easy and quick to put on and take off.
I have a broken bone in my lower leg. Can I use an iWALK 2.0 crutch?

Answer: Most often the answer is yes. If the broken bone is in your foot or ankle, almost certainly you can use iWALK 2.0. If in your fibula, then it’s also very likely. If you have a broken tibia, then you probably cannot use iWALK 2.0 but we’ve seen many instances where this was still possible. In all cases where there are fractures, you need to check with your physician before using iWALK 2.0.

I am a below knee (BK) amputee. Can I use the iWALK2.0?

Answer: Absolutely- in fact, the iWALK2.0 is an everyday item for many BK amputees who use it in common situations when they don't want to don their prosthetic leg. Examples are showering, short trips, at the gym, beach etc. iWALK2.0 is commonly used as a prosthetic training device for new amputees who are learning to walk on a prosthetic or for those who cannot yet tolerate a prosthetic limb. Also, if your prosthetic limb isn't available, for example, if it's getting repaired, the iWALK2.0 is your best substitute.

A commonly overlooked feature of the iWALK2.0 is that the mounts for the calf strap are free to slide forward and back on the "rails" which are integral to the side of the knee platform. This was done so that the user could position the strap in different locations to accommodate different conditions, casts, boots, etc. For amputees, this feature is key as it allows forward placement of the strap to accommodate residual limbs as short as four inches.

My knee hits the front edge of the Knee Platform. Even though there's padding there, it still hurts. What can I Do?

Answer: To maximize stiffness, the front face of the Knee Platform, which spans between the two vertical aluminum tubes, was designed to be straight across the front of the knee platform. We consulted well established anthropomorphical databases to make certain there was clearance for the knee, but in rare circumstances the knee does contact the upper edge of this
section, resulting in discomfort. The best solution is to remove some of this material, as it really isn’t needed – the Knee Platform is plenty stiff. In fact, at the time of the writing of this FAQ, we are implementing a running change to do just that.

So if the edge of the knee platform (located in between the two vertical alloy tubes) is straight across, you can simply remove some material by using a file, grinder, dremel, etc. We agree that this isn’t entirely elegant, but it does solve the problem, and it won’t hurt your crutch at all. Just remove a little bit of the material, starting at the center, until you have enough clearance that your knee no longer makes contact. It’s easy, and shouldn’t take more than a couple minutes to accomplish. Here is a picture to demonstrate this.

We are sorry to impose on you to make this modification, but we want to keep you comfortably iWALKing throughout your non-weight bearing period.

Another solution is increase the thickness of the knee platform pad (the one that you kneel on). This raises your leg and may provide the additional clearance you need. All you have to do is stack the new pad on top of the old one.

**Are the knee pads covered under warranty?**

If the area just below the kneecap is sore, try giving it a couple days. Most people who report initial discomfort find that it resolves itself within a day or two. If that doesn't work we've found that a second pad, stacked on top of the existing pad, solves the problem. The pad has a peel and stick application, so doubling them up is quick and easy. So why don't we make the pads thicker? We could, but the connection between your leg and the crutch is crucial—since your human foot is no longer in contact with the ground, you gain feel and control from your shin, so the less padding, the better. We have found that our 13mm pad is the best compromise for the vast majority of people, however, one size fits all is virtually impossible, so fortunately purchasing a supplemental pad is a quick, easy, inexpensive fix. If you prefer, you can fold up a common hand towel and achieve the same thing, but it won't be as professional looking.

**My iWALK2.0 is slippery on my wood floor, is this normal?**
The rubber that we use in our treads is about the same durometer as the tread on a tennis shoe, and has equivalent grip. That said, unlike a human foot, the iWALK foot does not have either fine motor control or the ability to flex at the ankle. As such, the surface area presented by our crutch will not always be equivalent to the human foot, and since traction and surface area are related, an iWALK foot, despite similar material, can have less traction than a human foot. Hard, slippery surfaces such as tile, polished hard wood, marble, etc., especially when wet, are slip and fall hazards regardless of the footwear, including iWALK2.0 treads. These surfaces are also very slippery to conventional crutch tips, which have even less surface area and are controlled by arms, not legs.

So can an iWALK2.0 slip on hard, slippery surfaces? Yes, of course. But so can a standard shoe or, and especially, a conventional crutch tip. Just as with regular shoes, caution must be exercised on any slippery surface, especially when wet. Caution and good judgment must be your guide in such situations.

One tip we can provide is that if the iWALK2.0 is brand new, the user can proactively scuff up the bottom of the treads. This typically happens rapidly in normal use. As the tread leaves the mold, the surface can be quite smooth, and just like sanding a piece of wood to make paint adhere, a bit of surface roughness assists in traction for the iWALK2.0 tread (and any tread for that matter). So if your iWALK2.0 feels slippery on any surface, try scuffing up the bottom of the treads and carefully try it again to see if things improve.

My upper thigh is larger than 27” maximum. Can I still use the iWALK2.0?

27” at the very top of your thigh is the largest that we would recommend for a couple reasons. First, and most important, going beyond the 27” maximum can make it more difficult to tighten the straps as much as is necessary for proper function. Second, the quick release buckles on the straps might not function optimally because you may not be able to loosen the straps enough to allow easy engagement and disengagement. We have seen people use the iWALK2.0 with up to a 29” thigh, but you need to be aware and accepting of the possible functional compromises.

Are the treads on the iWALK2.0 designed to be non-skid in rainy conditions or can they become slippery when wet?

The treads are made from material which has about the same traction as a tennis shoe in wet or dry conditions. Because you cannot articulate your knee or ankle in the iWALK, surface area on various terrains can be reduced, so some caution should be exercised. One thing to remember is that the traction and control using the iWALK2.0 will be substantially better than conventional crutches. In the event of an off balance incident, you will have much better recovery potential with a crutch that utilizes your leg than with conventional crutches which use your arms.
I have been using the iWALK2.0 crutch for 3 months and the knee pad is becoming slightly uncomfortable, what can I do to solve this problem?

The solution is to replace the padding, which is easy and inexpensive. The average person uses the iWALK2.0 for 3-6 weeks, and the padding will typically last longer than this, but not forever. Also, there is a small percentage of the population who have a protrusion in the tibia just below the knee, and for these people the area of the pad just behind the knee can compress rather quickly. In these rare instances, the answer is to get a second pad and simply stack it on top of the first. The replacement pads come with peel and stick adhesive, so they are easy to install.

One thing to note - the connection between the user and the crutch is essential for feel and control. If the crutch had no padding, it would function even better, but of course, it would be very uncomfortable. Too much padding would mute the interface between the crutch and user, and while it improves comfort, it reduces feel and control. We worked hard to find the optimum compromise between comfort and control, which is why our padding is not thicker. But for those rare few, the padding isn't enough, so adding supplemental padding is necessary.