

The Underarm Crutch Buyer's Guide

From Underarm Crutch Reviews — underarmcrutch.com

Underarm (axillary) crutches run from a \$40 drugstore pair to premium ergonomic and shock-absorbing designs that cost five to eight times as much. This guide covers the few things that actually decide whether a pair works for you: how long you will be on them, how to fit them so they do not hurt, the weight and size you need, and the comfort and portability tradeoffs. Read it once and you will buy the right pair the first time.

1. Decide between basic and premium first

This is the choice that matters most, and it comes down to how long and how hard you will use the crutches.

- **A few weeks of recovery:** a basic aluminum A-frame pair (\$30 to \$60) is all you need. It is sturdy, easy to size, and cheap. Add a \$10 gel underarm pad if the stock pad feels firm.
- **Months on crutches, or daily long-term use:** step up to a premium ergonomic or shock-absorbing pair (\$130 to \$330). Pivoting underarm saddles, spring or shock systems, and contoured grips genuinely reduce strain on your hands, wrists, and shoulders over long days.
- **Shoulder, wrist, or hand issues:** lean premium even for a shorter recovery. The ergonomics pay for themselves in comfort.

Match the spend to the time. Most people recovering from a short injury do not need the premium tier; people who live on crutches usually should not skip it.

2. Fit them right (this matters more than the brand)

A correctly fitted basic crutch beats a poorly fitted premium one. Two numbers:

- **Underarm pad:** about two inches (two finger-widths) below your armpit when you stand up straight with the crutch tips a few inches out to the side.
- **Hand grip:** at hip level, so your elbow bends about 15 to 30 degrees when you hold it.

Your weight rests on your hands, never your armpits. Leaning on the underarm pads can compress the nerves under your arm and cause “crutch palsy,” a weakness or tingling in the hand that can take weeks to resolve. The pad is there for balance and brief rests, not to carry

you. If your hands tire, you are still using the crutches correctly; that is what is supposed to happen.

This is general information, not medical advice. If a clinician fitted your crutches, follow their setup.

3. Match the size and weight capacity to the user

- **Height:** crutches sell in bands (youth, adult, tall adult) plus folding universal sizes. Pick the band that covers your height rather than maxing out one size. A pair set near the top of its range is less stable.
 - **Weight capacity:** most aluminum underarm crutches are rated 250 to 380 lb. Heavier users should move up to a **steel bariatric pair rated 500 lb or more**. Wood crutches usually top out around 250 lb. Check the per-crutch rating, not just the headline number.
 - **Buying for a child:** true youth sizing (roughly 4'6" to 5'2") is hard to find in stores but easy to order. There is also a smaller pediatric size below that.
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4. Weigh comfort, weight, and portability

- **Padding:** thicker foam or a pivoting saddle on the underarm and cushioned grips make long days easier. Thin stock pads are the first thing to upgrade on a basic pair.
 - **Weight:** lighter aluminum (around 2 to 4 lb each) is easier to swing through. Steel bariatric pairs are heavier; that is the cost of the higher rating.
 - **Folding:** a folding pair packs down to about 20 inches for a car trunk or overhead bin. Worth it if you travel; a rigid pair is steadier for all-day use at home.
 - **Adjustment:** push-button height adjustment is faster and more secure than wing-nut, which still shows up on wood and some folding models.
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5. Our picks by situation

Current models, prices, and where to buy are kept up to date at underarmcrutch.com/best/underarm-crutches. By use case:

- **Best for most people (short recovery):** a standard aluminum pair like the Drive Medical Aluminum. Sturdy, 350 lb, cheap, sold everywhere.

- **Best premium (comfort over months):** the Millennial Medical In-Motion Pro, with spring shock-absorption and ergonomic angled grips.
 - **Best ergonomic:** the Mobilegs Ultra, whose pivoting saddle and rocker feet take pressure off your arm.
 - **Most comfortable basic:** the Vive Health pair, with thicker foam at a mid price.
 - **Best value:** the Hugo Mobility pair.
 - **Best for travel:** the Carex folding pair.
 - **Heavy-duty (500 lb):** the Drive Medical steel bariatric pair.
 - **For kids and short adults:** the Drive Medical youth pair.
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Quick pre-buy checklist

- Will you be on crutches weeks (basic) or months (premium)?
 - Does the size band cover your height with room to spare?
 - Is the weight capacity above the user's weight, with margin?
 - Push-button adjustment (faster) vs wing-nut?
 - Do you need it to fold for travel?
 - Budget for a gel underarm pad if the stock pad is thin.
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