

Nordic Walking

Nordic Walking is a physical activity which enhances your natural way of walking through the use of specially-designed poles. This reduces the impact on your joints and encourages stability. It also provides a workout for your upper body; it puts less strain on your legs; it helps you walk more effectively and it makes exercise less tiring.

You can do Nordic Walking wherever you can walk. It is a great way for people of all ages to avoid a sedentary lifestyle and obesity, start doing physical exercise and improve arthrosis and problems with balance. You can do it in a group with others.

The level of intensity should be adapted to suit each person's individual ability.

Try to start off with a qualified instructor so as to learn the right technique and avoid injuries.

Gear

Wear comfortable clothing; preferably, breathable sportswear suited to the climate. Choose socks made of synthetic material rather than cotton, which absorbs a lot of sweat and can give you blisters.

Use Nordic Walking poles: they're made of carbon materials, have sloping tips rather than squared ones, and straps to put over your thumb. These straps (called gauntlets) tell you which pole is for each hand: the left one is marked L, and the right one, R. **Don't confuse these poles with trekking poles.** The right size of Nordic poles for you depends on your height and they aren't adjustable.

Technique

A correct technique will ensure the most benefit.

Before starting: to avoid injuries you should **warm up** your neck, back, arms, knees, ankles, hips and thighs.

Author: Laia Santasusagna
Scientific Review: CAMFiC Exercise Group
Editorial Review: CAMFiC Health Education Group

Posture: keep your torso straight, your shoulders down and relaxed, look in front of you and avoid tilting your head.

Movement: move your arms and legs alternately (left arm with right leg and vice versa). Swing your arms naturally, without bending them and rotate the upper body slightly in coordination with the arm movement.

Steps: roll the foot from the heel to the ball, and then to the toes, with each step. Take slightly bigger strides than normal.

Use of the poles: hold the pole with your fist, further in front of you than the tip touching the ground.

Stick the tip of the pole firmly in the ground with each step. Plant the pole with your hand closed and relax it when the pole comes in line with hip. This means that you will open your hand and end up using the gauntlet to push, without holding the handle with your hand. Try not to open your hand too soon because this could create tension and lead to strange movements.

At the end: when you finish the activity, do a few gentle, painless **stretches** with your arms, legs and back to relax the muscles and help them recover. Each stretch should last 30 seconds maximum.



Source: Hacienda Huella Nordic Walking school.