



Yukon Nordic Walking Leader Guide



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Our Organizations

The Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon (RPAY) is dedicated to empowering, through recreation and parks, people throughout the Yukon of all abilities to adopt healthy and active lifestyles. Nordic walking supports our objective to improve the quality of life for all Yukoners through the acquisition of skills and attitudes that support participation in activity, recreation and amateur sport over their life-span.

Contact the Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon at:

4061 4th Avenue, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 1H1

Toll free: 1-866-961-WALK (9255)

Phone: 867-668-3010

Email: rpay@rpay.ca

Website: www.rpay.ca



ElderActive Recreation Association (ERA) is a Yukon organization grounded in an active living philosophy for seniors and elders. It seeks to enhance the lives of all Yukoners 55 years of age and over, through events, programs and education that are intended to develop and maintain health and wellness in body, mind and spirit.

Contact Elderactive Recreation Association at:

4061 4th Avenue, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 1H1

Phone: 867-456-8252

Email: elderactive@sportyukon.com

Website: www.elderactive.ca



Active Living

Understanding Active Living...

Currently, more than half the Yukon's population—adults and children alike—face unnecessary health risks of premature death and chronic disease due to inactive lifestyles. For more than twenty years, national reports have highlighted increasing rates of overweight and obesity amongst children and adults, and now territorial reports are noting similar trends.

Historically, Yukoners led healthy lifestyles outdoors and on the land. We tended to be more active and at healthier weights when compared to the Canadian population. Sadly, this trend is reversing. According to the Canadian Community Household Survey (2009), in 2008 the rates of overweight and obesity were higher for the first time ever in the Yukon at 54% than the rest of Canada at 52%. Coupled with significantly low rates of physical activity levels over the winter months, this poses an alarming view for the potential of poor health in the future. We know that the increasing number of inactive Yukoners poses a considerable public health burden in terms of increased individual suffering and stress on our health care system.

In response to the physical inactivity crisis, federal, provincial and territorial governments have promoted the “Active Living” concept to Canadians. Active Living is a way of life in which physical activity is valued and integrated into daily life! Active Living is inclusive and encourages everyone to work towards healthier and more active lifestyles at their own pace.

The benefits of being active everyday are endless and include:

- ✓ Better overall health
- ✓ Reduced risk of Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke
- ✓ Healthy weight management
- ✓ Increased relaxation and positive moods
- ✓ Stronger muscles and bones
- ✓ Better posture and balance
- ✓ Increased energy levels
- ✓ Decreased stress

Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living recommends moderate physical activity every day to maintain or improve health. Being active can be worked into each day in periods of 10 minutes. People can start being more active slowly and gradually increase the amount and intensity of activity. It does not cost a lot to be physically active, but it is important to choose enjoyable activities. Frequent bouts of moderate activity such as brisk walking, household chores,

gardening and recreational sports can be as effective as vigorous exercise. A variety of activities should be chosen from these three groups:

- Endurance activities for the heart, lungs and circulatory system like walking, gardening, cycling, skating and dancing.
- Flexibility activities, like tai chi, yoga, curling, bowling and housework, keep muscles relaxed and joints mobile.
- Strength activities build muscles and bones and can include heavy yard work, carrying groceries, climbing stairs, wearing a backpack and shovelling snow!

The Yukon Government's Active Living Strategy encourages Yukoners to be active on a daily basis. The Yukon Active Living Strategy was implemented in 2001 and renewed in 2012. The Yukon Active Living Strategy provides strategic directions to address emerging priorities such as increasing rates of obesity and physical inactivity through a variety of programs and initiatives. Furthermore, it places a particular emphasis on programs that enable children and youth to be active during the after school time period, and on strategies that encourage Yukoners to reach our national physical activity targets.

The Yukon Active Living Strategy provides strategic directions and goals based on a philosophy of health equity, inclusion and collaboration. Together, the strategic directions and goals define the broad and long-term changes needed to realize the vision of a more active Yukon and healthy communities. Implementation of the Strategy occurs through four settings: Active Yukoners, Active Yukon Communities, Active Yukon Schools and Active Yukon Workplaces. Although responsibility for implementing the Strategy rests with Yukon Government Sport and Recreation Branch, a more active Yukon becomes a reality when governments, communities, businesses, non-profit groups and Yukon residents work together cooperatively and collaboratively.

For more information on the Yukon Active Living Strategy, please contact:

Yukon Government Sport and Recreation Branch

Tel: 867-667-5254

Toll free: 1-800-661-0408 ext 8729



Guides and Tools for Physical Activity

Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines and Canada's Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines are now available for all age groups. The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology hosts these guidelines.

www.csep.ca/guidelines

- Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for the Early Years 0-4
- Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Children 5-11 years
- Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Youth 12-17 years
- Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults 18-64 years
- Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults 65 years and older
- Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for the Early Years 0-4
- Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Children 5-11 years
- Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Youth 12-17 years



active yukon
LIFESTYLES

*Do a little,
live a lot!*

*being active
is easier than
you think*

*Do what you enjoy -
walking, gardening or
playing Frisbee
with the kids.
Being active for 30-60
minutes daily and a healthy
diet help you feel better
and reduce your risk for
Type II diabetes.*

*For information and
inspiration, call RPA at
867-668-3010*

RPA
Recreation
and Parks
Association
of the Yukon

Yukon
Community Services
Community Development, Recreation,
Sport & Tourism

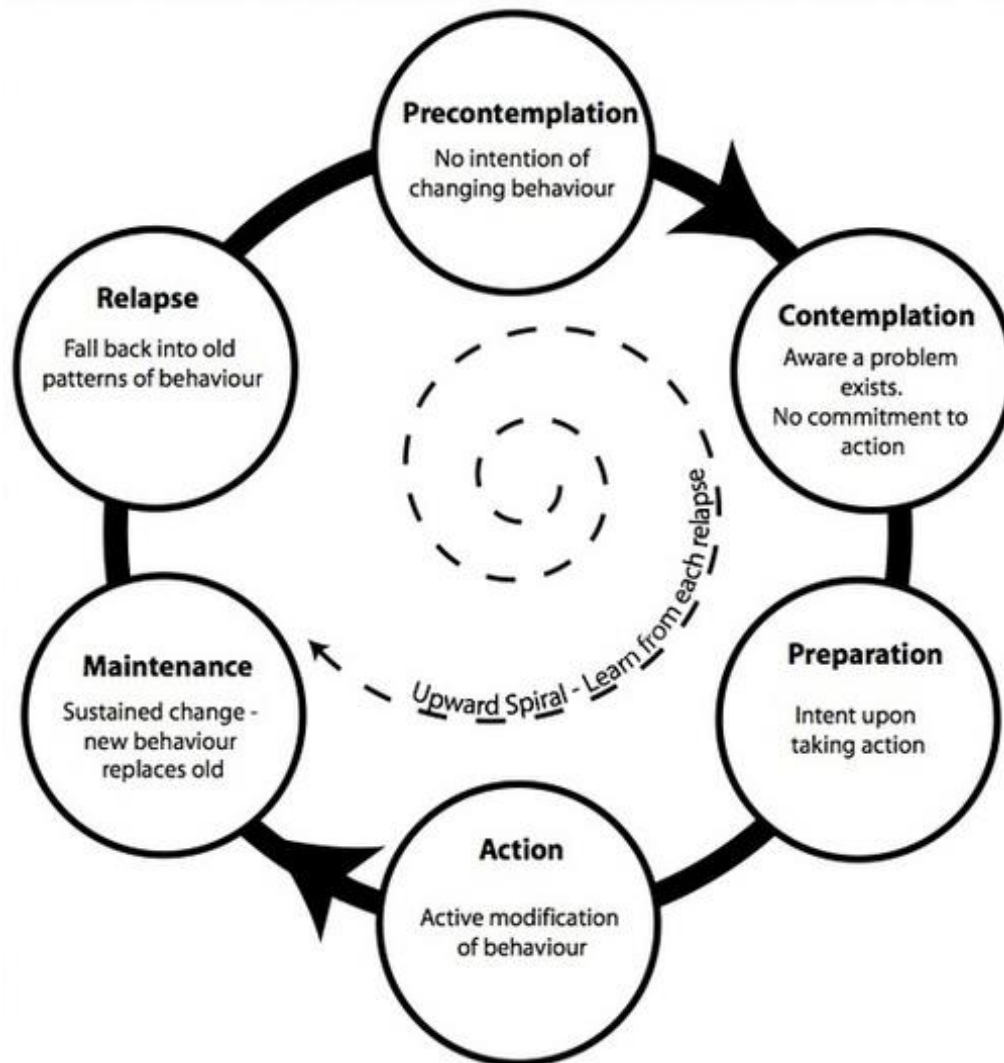
Regular physical activity is fun and healthy. Being more active is very safe for most people. However, people with high blood pressure, heart disease or obesity should consult their doctor before they increase their physical activity levels.

The PAR-Q questionnaire can help people determine whether or not they should consult a doctor before becoming more physically active.

www.csep.ca

Motivating Participants to be Active

When making decisions on how to motivate your program participants, consider where they might be on the stages of change model. Your strategy to motivate and support them should be different at each stage as shown in the following model.¹



Based on the concepts of periodization, focusing on a particular component of fitness for a specific period of time is a safe and progressive approach to physical activity. By progressively challenging your participants in their activity routines, you can prevent boredom and provide an ever-changing fitness level.

¹ www.fitnessnewspaper.com/2012/03/02/a-triangular-approach-to-fat-loss-by-stephen-tongue

Start slowly and build up...²

Canada's Physical Activity Guide recommends accumulating at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week to average 150 minutes per week.

The good news is that activity can be accumulated in 10-minute sessions. You could walk your dog for 10 minutes. At noon, you could choose to walk to your favourite restaurant for lunch for another 10 minutes. Then, later in the day, you could try to squeeze in a 20-minute walk with a friend which would give you a daily activity total of 40 minutes.

STRATEGY: One way to help people increase their physical activity is to monitor walking sessions. There are tools available to help measure and monitor progress. A physical activity log or an activity tracker can record daily physical activity. For smartphone users, a number of apps can be used to track walking distances, rates and routes. Most apps use GPS tracking which provides an added safety feature. Technology can help users track accumulated distances and times walked.

If the goal is to walk for 45 minutes during lunch on a minimum of four days per week, then a checkmark or star is placed in a logbook or recorded in an app for each day that goal is met.

Wearing a pedometer or using an app in a smartphone can track all the steps taken during walks or in an entire day. The number of steps is recorded at the end of each day to determine whether the personal goal has been met or not. A simple glance shows progress over time.

DURATION: People sometimes like to measure other aspects of their walking program. Over time, encourage an increase the duration or length of time walked. For example, if a person has been walking for 20 minutes three times a week, they could try increasing the length of their walk to 25 minutes, and then to 30 minutes, over the next few weeks.

FREQUENCY: Another option is to increase the frequency, or number of days walked each week. A person who has been walking three times per week could try adding one or two more walking sessions each week.

INTENSITY: Finally, a person may want to cover more distance in the same amount of time; this is called intensity. Walking briskly increases health benefits more quickly than a leisurely walk. The "Talk Test" can be used to ensure that walking is at a safe and appropriate intensity.



² www.cflri.ca/media/node/411/files/pam2003_06.pdf

Walking; a Great Way to be Active!

It is not surprising that walking is the most popular form of exercise in Canada. Walking is a simple, low-cost, healthy activity, plus it is fun, social and energizing. Walking more often is one of the best things anyone can do to improve their health and get into the habit of active living.

Did you know that more than half the body's muscles are designed for walking? Walking is a safe, low-impact exercise for almost everyone, including people who may be overweight or have a medical condition, such as arthritis.

Just 30 minutes of walking most days of the week makes a person feel better, have more energy, and sleep better. When people walk, they carry their body weight which helps to keep their bones strong. Walking briskly works their heart, so it helps to keep blood pressure and cholesterol under control. Remember, if a person aims to walk for 30 minutes or more each day, it does not have to be done all at once—it can be broken up into three shorter sessions of 10 minutes each.

Even if someone cannot walk briskly, they can walk at a pace that works for them and still enjoy many benefits. For wheelchair users or people with other mobility issues, going for a walk with friends or an aide provides a similar range of benefits.

Walking also improves mental health, partly because it helps to reduce stress. Some people enjoy walking alone or in nature because it provides a quiet time to relax and reflect. Others prefer to walk with a friend or a walking group. They enjoy the social contact, lively conversation, and the chance to get to know friends, neighbours, or fellow workers.

Using people power is good for the environment. The more we walk, the less we drive, and the fewer pollutants are put into the air.

Walking connects people with their communities and helps them feel they belong there. When a person goes out for a walk, they may greet neighbours and catch up on local news. They may notice new things going on in their community. “Was that new house there a year ago?” “Is that a community garden in the park?”³

Walking Resources

You can find more information about walking on RPAY's website at www.rpay.ca/walking-be-active. The site provides a link to maps of walking routes in and around Yukon communities.

Canada Walks (canadawalks.ca) promotes the value of walking and walkability, and works with partners to help build Canada's walking movement.

³ www.healthyalberta.com/ActiveLiving/870.htm

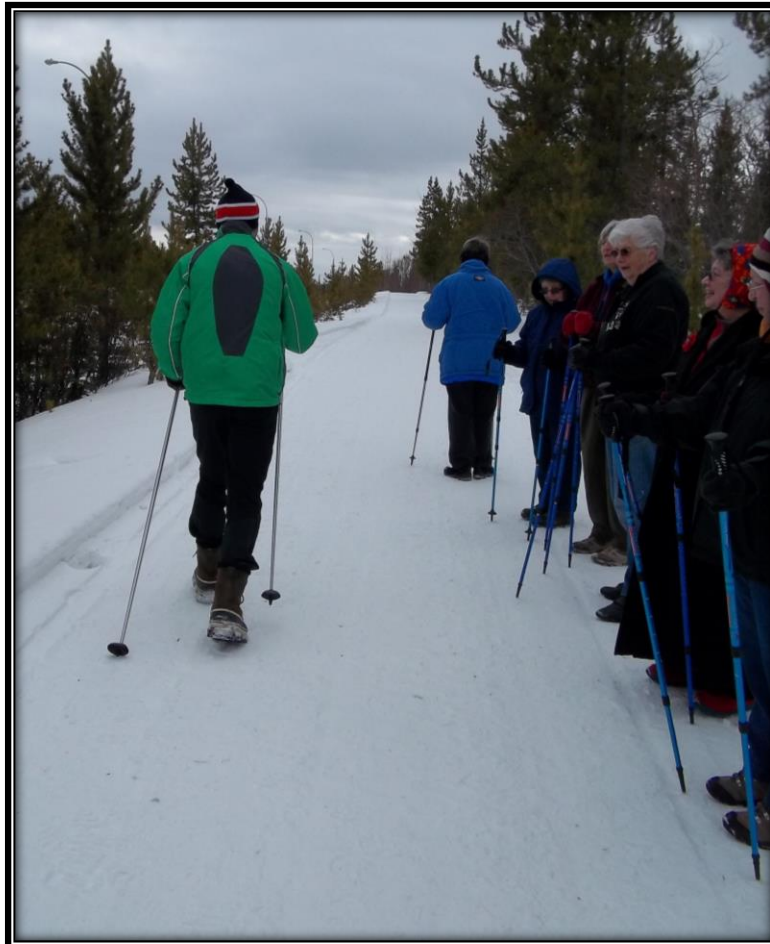
Nordic Walking

What is Nordic Walking?

Nordic walking originated for skiers to train in the off-season and then became popular all year round. Nordic walking, originally known as ski walking, is a physical activity consisting of walking with poles similar to ski poles. It is easily integrated into one's daily lifestyle and it increases health benefits for all ages and ability levels.

“Nordic walking is one of the easiest and best fitness activities for weight loss and maintenance.”

Shirley Firth-Larsson, former cross-country ski Olympian, Inuvik, NWT



Nordic Walking Benefits

Whether participants are experienced or just beginning to exercise, Nordic walking is a great fitness activity and provides a better workout than regular walking. Nordic walking combines walking with the use of poles. Poles help walkers balance and walk on slippery or uneven terrain.

As an activity, Nordic walking contributes to increases in overall strength and endurance in the core muscles and upper body. It helps prevent bone loss and osteoporosis, and enables weight management. Nordic walking offers a variety of fitness benefits.

Participants may experience improved:

- ✓ endurance and circulation
- ✓ upper body strength
- ✓ heart and lung capacity
- ✓ mobility of their neck and spine
- ✓ posture and body awareness
- ✓ balance and stability
- ✓ flexibility and range of motion in all joints

Participants may experience reduced:

- ✓ stress on their hips, knees, back and ankles
- ✓ pain and tension in their neck and shoulder region

Compare the Benefits ⁴ between...	Nordic Walking	Walking	Running
# of muscles trained	approximately 600	between 300 and 400	between 300 and 400
% of muscles trained	90%	50-60 %	50-60 %
Stress on the joints	1.3 x body weight	1.3 x body weight	3 – 4 x body weight
Taking weight off the joints	up to 30%	none	none
Calories burned per hour	approximately 400	approximately 280	approximately 600

⁴ www.timberdoodleoutdoors.com/nwa

Nordic Walking Equipment

For a quality, Nordic walking experience, participants need to have the right gear for where and when they plan to walk. Being prepared and having the right equipment will depend on whether they plan to walk in summer or winter, and on trails or pavement. Being properly prepared, by planning and having appropriate equipment, footwear and clothing for the environment, will make their Nordic walking experiences safer and more enjoyable.

Clothing:

Feet First...

Footwear is very important. Feet need to be comfortable, supported and protected. Participants should avoid shoes with rigid soles and choose light, flexible and breathable shoes that provide stability and traction. Footwear will be different in winter as warmth is essential. Encourage participants to buy their shoes at an outdoor store where they can be helped by experienced and knowledgeable staff.

Dress for the Activity and the Weather...

Exercising outdoors requires dressing in layers—particularly in Yukon! Once participants start moving, they warm up and start to perspire. If clothing is layered, they can remove one layer at a time to allow their body to cool down and to decrease the possibility of sweating. Appropriate clothing will be made of fabric that is unrestrictive, breathable or wicking. This allows comfortable movement and removes moisture away from the skin. Cotton and denim retain moisture and are heavy so are not recommended.

To reduce the risk of cold-related conditions, participants need to cover their hands and head in windy, wet or cold temperatures. Gloves and mitts should be thin enough to fit through straps, but thick enough to keep hands warm. Adjustable straps allow for various thicknesses of gloves. Gloves and mitts should have a non-slippery palm surface to permit an adequate grip on the pole. Toques should be worn on colder or windy days as a significant amount of heat is lost from the head. Hats, sunglasses and sunscreen will protect the skin and eyes on sunny days.



Nordic Walking Poles:

Nordic walking poles come in several models designed for a range of budgets. Educate participants about the characteristics to look for when they are choosing poles. Explain the different features so that they can make the best choice for their ability, fitness level, environment and budget.

Encourage participants to consider options such as:

- ⇒ Adjustable poles for when they want to change the pole length for their own height or for walking in varying terrain and conditions.
- ⇒ Adjustable wrist straps will allow room in the straps for covering hands in the winter. Adjustable straps also benefit participants with mobility concerns such as arthritis.
- ⇒ Poles with shock absorbers will increase the level of comfort by the use of internal cork or springs.
- ⇒ A variety of optional pole tips provides a selection of interchangeable tips and baskets. Participants should fit their Nordic walking poles with tips designed for the specific conditions and terrain in which they plan to walk. This ensures they get the best possible performance from their poles. Optional tips (described in greater detail in the next section) include:

- gravel, sand, or dirt baskets
- snow or mud baskets
- asphalt or rough concrete hard “booty”
- smooth asphalt or concrete, indoor surfaces and running track “booty”
- a carbide tip for natural and firmer terrain



**Rocker Booties
with Snow/Mud
Baskets on Poles**

**Adjustable Pole
Strap and Handle**



**Adjustable Poles with Shock
Absorber Feature**

Before you go:

Educate participants about the importance of proper planning and preparation before they exercise and before they head out on their favourite trail. Appropriate clothing and a few items in a small pack or hip pack will help them have a safe and enjoyable walk.

Water...

Drinking water before walking will help participants stay well-hydrated and will improve their body's ability to maintain a normal body temperature. It is wise to always have a full water bottle, no matter the walking distance or time.

Whereabouts...

Participants should always tell someone where they are going and when they expect to return. Smart Travel Planning tools are available from the Yukon Government's Department of Health and Social Services. More Travel Smart information can be found on the Health Promotion Unit's website at www.hss.gov.yk.ca/travelsmart.php.

What Else...

Encourage participants to consider items in the list below. What they choose to take along will depend on the time of year, the length of their walk, the location of the walk, and the weather!

- Water bottle
- Healthy snack
- Cell phone
- Sun screen
- Sunglasses
- Insect repellent
- Bear spray
- Band aids for scratches and blisters
- Small First Aid Kit
- Lip balm
- Maps and trail guides
- Raingear, toque, gloves, etc.
- GPS
- Pedometer

Warming up and cooling down...

Teach participants to do an appropriate warm-up before they set out on their walk, and a cool-down on their return. Refer participants to the Yukon Nordic Walking Participant Guide and Yukon Nordic Walking Exercises poster for appropriate exercises.

Warm up with active & fun exercises...



Leg Swings



Toe Tapping



Upper Torso Twist



Canoe Paddle Twist



Ankle Roll



Pelvic Loops

Cool Down with these exercises after your walk...

Hold each for at least 45-60 seconds.



Shoulder



Flat Back



Tricep/Arm



Side Stretch



Quad



Hamstring/Calf

Nordic Walking Technique

Walk and Talk... Make sure participants can carry on a conversation while walking. This helps them to walk at a safe and comfortable speed!

Optional Pole Tips

There are a variety of pole tips that can be used on Nordic walking poles. Teach participants to choose the correct pole tip for the weather and terrain.

Nordic walking poles have a carbide tip. Find this tip under the removable rubber end. Using this tip on its own will provide a good grip on natural trails and terrain, such as grass and firm soil.



Carbide Pole Tip

Baskets can be fitted to Nordic walking poles. Baskets are designed to stop poles from sinking into soft ground such as gravel, sand, dirt, snow or mud. Low profile dirt/mud baskets and snow baskets twist off and on via a threaded pole groove just above the tip.



Snow or mud baskets



Gravel, sand, or dirt baskets



Rocker Booty



A booty for smooth asphalt or concrete, indoor surfaces, or running tracks

“Booties” are traction tips that look a little like a boot. They slide on and off the pole tip with a gentle tug. The correct orientation of the boot is with “toe” facing behind the person. Show participants how to align the tip. They will place their foot on the “toe” tip and turn the pole with their hand holding the shaft or grip until the correct position is achieved in relation to the grip.



Positioning the Rocker Booty

To remove “stuck” tips or “boots”, participants will place the pole tip on a hard surface and step on the “toe” of the tip with one foot. With other foot, they will push down on the “heel” of the tip, angle poles slightly away, and give a firm and quick jerk upwards.

Adjusting the Poles

How to Adjust Pole Length...

Most Nordic walking poles have a “quick twist” adjustment system with an expander located at the end of each shaft. The expander opens when tightened to lock the poles and closes when loosened to release the poles. It takes only one or two turns in either direction to lock or release.

With the poles in the tip-up position, participants turn the shaft to be adjusted counter-clockwise to release and clockwise to lock. It is important to hold the adjacent shaft to prevent it from turning. To adjust the length, release the shaft, slide the shaft in or out to the desired length and then lock it in place. Sometimes poles can be tight and difficult to adjust, so ensure participants are grasping the pole shafts and not the black expander units.

Teach participants to adjust their poles depending on where and how they plan to walk.

- ⇒ On off-road terrain, participants should adjust the poles so that the forearms are almost parallel to the ground with the elbow at a 90° angle as shown in the adjacent diagram.
- ⇒ On standard and level terrain at a steady walking pace, the poles should be adjusted to a length that positions the forearm in an upward slope.
- ⇒ On terrain that provides maximum traction or “bite”, a more aggressive angle or longer pole may be used.
- ⇒ When walking at a greater speed and on even-terrain, fast-paced walkers should have their poles adjusted to a slightly shorter pole length so their forearms slope slightly downward.

**Elbows should almost form a 90° angle.
Wrists should be slightly higher than elbows.**



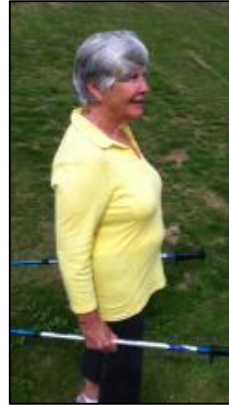
Fitting Hand Straps...

Ergonomically designed, adjustable straps will provide maximum performance and comfort. With a hand in the strap, the ideal fit should distribute the “load” evenly to the hand and wrist and offer support with pressure points. Ensure that straps are not over-tightened as this could decrease the range of motion and circulation.

Basic Nordic Walking Technique

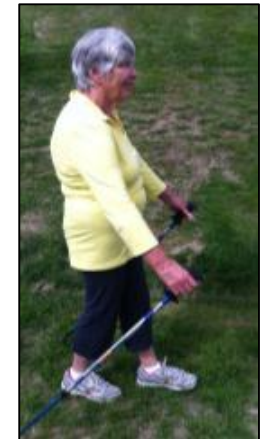
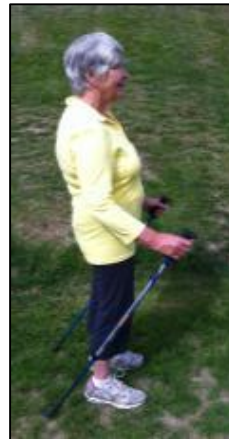
HOLD

- ✓ Hold the poles in the middle.
- ✓ Keep the poles parallel to the ground.
- ✓ Begin to walk and allow arms to swing freely.



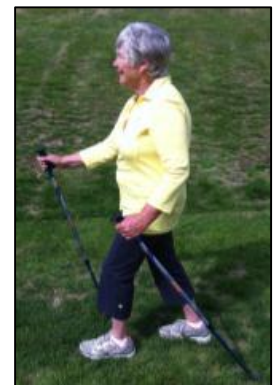
DRAG

- ✓ Place hands in each loop and tighten comfortably.
- ✓ Keep hands open and walk normally, swinging arms, as the poles hang from the hands.
- ✓ Drag poles behind while walking.
- ✓ After a few minutes of dragging the poles, swing the arms in a normal and then exaggerated arm motion on the forward swing (from hip to shoulder).



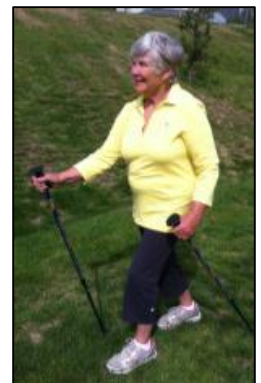
PLANT

- ✓ With each stride, plant the pole and use it to propel forward.
- ✓ Keep the poles on an angle and plant them behind the body.
- ✓ Push lightly down and back on straps and keep hand relaxed on the grips; hand should be open as arm extends back.



PUSH OFF

- ✓ Keep the shoulders back and the hips forward.
- ✓ After planting the pole, walk through the stride with the hips forward and the shoulders back.
- ✓ Push down and back on straps with a relaxed hand on the grips
- ✓ As push off is completed, hand should be open and relaxed - if needed, use thumb and index finger to maintain contact with grip before pulling swinging the arm forward again.



Technique Tips

Remind participants to...

- ✓ Dress for the weather.
 - ✓ Keep hydrated.
 - ✓ Grab the pole and not the black piece between the poles.
 - ✓ Turn the shocks on or off.
 - ✓ Walk naturally, keeping their shoulders and arms relaxed. Arms remain almost straight.
- 
- ✓ Plant the poles behind the body and pointed diagonally backwards.
 - ✓ Do not grasp poles tightly; keep the blood circulating!
 - ✓ Swing opposing arm and leg.
 - ✓ Shoulders are back and hips are forward.
 - ✓ Keep poles about shoulder width apart for stability.

Other Considerations



Common Mistakes:

If a participant complains of...

- ⇒ Sore forearms
- ⇒ Sore arms
- ⇒ Feeling awkward
- ⇒ No resistance in upper body
- ⇒ Sore shoulders

They may be...

- Placing their thumbs on top of the pole grips
- Gripping their poles too tightly
- Planting the pole too hard into the ground
- Planting the pole too far ahead of their body
- Not using a natural stride
- Planting their poles away from their body
- Walking with poles which are too short
- Not using their poles to propel themselves forward
- Walking with poles that are too long

Terrain & Technique Considerations:

ROAD TECHNIQUE: When Nordic walking on asphalt or concrete, the traction bootie or tips increase the friction, or “bite”, of the pole tips, but not always to the same level as the sharp off-road tip does when used on grass.

To compensate for less push-off, participants must increase the forward motion of their poles. The pole tips swing forward to be planted beside the lead foot. The arm motion is like reaching out to shake someone’s hand. The push-off phase can be maintained until the pole’s tip loses traction OR until the arm and pole can be extended with pole tip leaving ground.

OFF-ROAD TECHNIQUE: This technique is derived from the common use of poles on the trail where unloading tired or overloaded legs are a priority. This style is great for Nordic walkers with lower body orthopaedic concerns or rehabilitation applications. It greatly reduces leg load and impact with each step.

In this style the poles function like a second pair of legs. The tips plant evenly with the opposite foot on each step taken. Arm motion should be kept to a minimum to allow poles to swing into position. Gentle pressure downward on the poles “lifts” the body up and unloads the legs.

UP-HILL TECHNIQUE: Keeping poles in a positive angle provides a strong push-off and power to climb a hill. Arms are kept closer to the body as the slope increases to provide greater stability.

DOWN-HILL TECHNIQUE: When going down steep declines, the primary use of the poles is to minimize pressure on the knees. If it is a long descent, poles should be adjusted to a longer length, and the steeper the decline, the longer the pole length. Maintain opposing arm and leg movement as in all other techniques. Arm movement is limited and pressing down on the leading pole allows unloading of the leading leg.

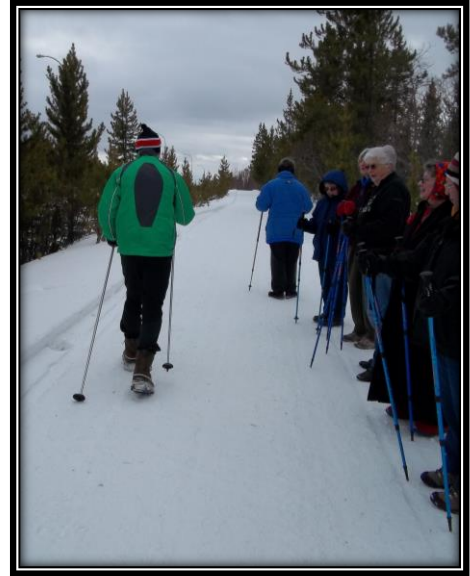


Leading a Group

Your Responsibilities

As an instructor it is important to fully understand the responsibility of leading a group or even walking with a single participant. As a leader or instructor, you must:

- Assume participant and personal liability and be covered by liability insurance!
- Understand each participant's medical history and/or limitations and how to stay within your scope of practice as an instructor.
- Prepare a safe and progressive instructional plan. Develop more detailed lesson plans for each class.
- Have a current Standard First Aid and CPR certificate.
- Be accountable for teaching the correct and safe technique within the capacity and fitness levels of the participant(s).
- Be accountable for instructing participant(s) in a safe indoor or outdoor environment.



As a leader or instructor, you have the opportunity to adapt exercise classes to a group's needs and goals. People vary widely in their health and fitness levels, motivation, goals, age, needs, health habits and medical background. Developing a progressive program that best meets the group's needs in a safe and effective manner requires following a few basic, yet important steps.

STEP 1: TARGET & PREPARE: Define what age, ability level, medical conditions and goals your program will target. This will then allow you to pick the correct progression of Nordic walking classes and terrain/trails.

Ensure that your class/program design is written down so you have a clear image of who you want to attract and how the class will unfold. Set a goal for each class. Have linear progressions set out that allow the class to reach the goal and accommodate set-backs along the way.

STEP 2: GET TO KNOW YOUR PARTICIPANTS: Have participants register and fill out a participant registration form that includes some basic personal information and pay attention to any medical history that may affect their physical ability to complete the class. Ask participants what motivates them, what their individual goals are, or why they registered for the class.

STEP 3: KNOW THE TEACHING STYLES: Remember that people learn in different ways. You will need to use, and practice, all styles of teaching including; talking through the steps, showing the steps, and having participants try the steps. It may take several attempts on your part before participants fully understand so practice patience.

STEP 4: MONITOR & EVALUATE: Knowing how your participants feel as you begin the class or are halfway through, is just as important as the feeling afterwards. You may need to adjust your plan during a class depending on the feedback you receive. This is integral to keeping participants motivated.

Always provide a tool in which participants can provide feedback and evaluate sessions and your instruction. After receiving feedback, take time to evaluate your program plan and the outcomes by taking notes. Ask yourself...what would you change? What would you keep the same? What can you add to enhance the experience? What do you need to fine tune in your delivery?

STEP 5: PRACTICE BEING A GOOD LEADER: Consider the characteristics of a good leader. How can you integrate these into your leadership style?

- Empathy is about understanding the participants' feelings.
- Respect involves appreciating the worth of the participants.
- Warmth means communicating concern and genuine interest in their well-being.
- Genuineness involves being yourself and bringing out your best traits as a leader.
- Self-disclosure means that you may share an experience about yourself to let others feel comfortable and to help them feel comfortable sharing as well.

STEP 6: SAFETY & LIABILITY: Always remember that as a leader, you are responsible for each participant's safety at all times. Choose the terrain and design class activities carefully. Know your limits and the limits of your participants. Have an emergency plan in place and share it before starting the class. Remind participants to practice personal safety on their own as well.

As a leader, liability and insurance coverage are important and you may need to inquire from the recreation centre or association you are representing about personal liability coverage. You need to protect yourself as well as your participants. If you are leading your own classes, it is always recommended to have insurance coverage and to require liability waivers from all participants.

Risk in Recreation Settings

Managing Risk is **EVERYONE'S** Responsibility...



What is Risk?

Risk is the chance that something will go wrong.

Recreation is more enjoyable when we reduce, not eliminate, risk.



Who Does Risk Affect?



MORDIC-WALKING

- Program Leader
- Participants
- Spectators
- Family and Friends
- Suppliers and Contractors
- Medical Practitioners
- Community
- Future User Groups
- Insurance Agency
- Building Owner
- Program Funder

What is Risk Management?

Risk Management is the process of assessing your risk exposure, and then developing and implementing action plans to minimize its impact.



Where Do We Encounter Risk?

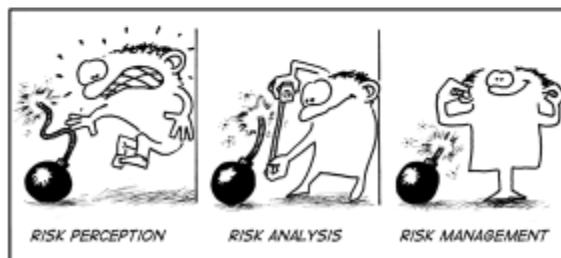
In recreation, we encounter risk and can reduce risk in 5 key areas:

1. Supervision and Instruction
2. Training
3. Documentation
4. Facilities & Equipment
5. Emergency Response Plan



Risk Management: a 3-step Process

1. Identify high risk and low risk issues and concerns in five key areas.
2. Identify controls that could be put in place to reduce the risks.
3. Plan to put the controls in place.



Step One - Identify Risks

Identify potential Nordic Walking risks by asking questions in each area.

Supervision & Instruction	Training	Documentation	Facilities & Equipment	Emergency Response Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of leaders• Qualifications leader should have• Leader to participant ratios• Lesson plans• Appropriate progression for skill level	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What training is needed and who needs it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waivers or Informed Consent• Medical Forms / PAR-Q• Pole use agreements• RHEAL Leader contract• Insurance• Vulnerable Sector Checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inspections of equipment• Maintenance of trails or roadways where walking• Checklist of appropriate clothing and footwear• Signage• Headlamps or reflective wear	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan in place and shared• Rehearsals / Drills• Emergency equipment• Communications

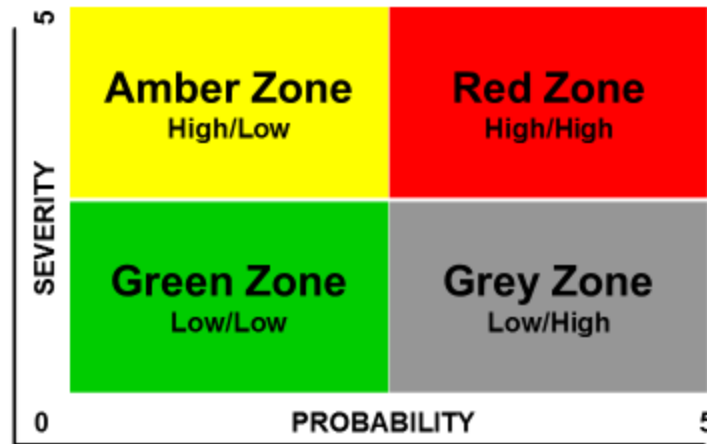
Potential Risks

- Uneven Terrain
- Faulty Equipment
- Improperly Dressed
- Bears and Wildlife
- Inadequate Planning
- No Map or Trip Plan
- Medical Problems
- No Cell Phone or Communications
- Participants separated from the Group
- Lack of Emergency Plan



Step One – Assess Degree of Risk

“using instinct”



Step One: Assess Degree of Risk

“using numbers”

Probability (P): What are the chances of someone getting hurt, on a scale of 1-5?

Severity (S): How serious could the injury be, on a scale of 1-5?

Description of Risks	Probability (P)	Severity (S)	Level of Risk (P x S)	Risk Rating

Risk Rating Definitions

Description of Risks	Describe each risk as if there are no control plans in place
Probability (P)	The <u>likelihood</u> that an event or accident will occur. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> unlikely to occur unlikely but some chance could occur occasionally good chance it will happen high possibility it will happen
Severity (S)	The expected <u>consequence</u> of an event in terms of serious injury, etc. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> insignificant, minor injury, property damage first aid or minor property damage injury requires medical help, significant property damage injury may result in serious medical problems, serious property damage fatal injury, major property damage
Risk Level	Obtained by multiplying PxS Reflects the total severity of the Risk 20 – 25 Extreme Risk 14 – 19 High Risk 7 – 13 Moderate Risk 0 - 6 Low Risk
Risk Rating	

Step Two: Identify Controls



Identify controls, things we can do, stop doing or change that will reduce the risks we identified in each area.

1. Supervision & Instruction
2. Training
3. Documentation
4. Facilities & Equipment
5. Emergency Response Plan

Potential Controls

Supervision & Instruction

- Have an extra leader at the end of the group
- Keep a head count for your group

Training

- Have training in SFA/CPR and Bear Aware

Documentation

- Record where you are going
- Write down emergency procedures
- Provide written instructions to participants
- Collect Medical Forms
- Require a completed Par-Q
- Consider using Release Forms (waiver or informed consent)



Potential Controls continued



Facilities & Equipment

- Check pole length and baskets
- Require appropriate clothing
- Wear clothing in layers
- Bring a hat
- Pack Bear Spray

Emergency Response Plan

- Take a map
- Be able to communicate (SPOT or cell phone)
- Have an Emergency Plan and share it!

Leftover Risk

- Leftover risk is what remains after controls are put in place.
- Assess left-over risk and decide if it is worth doing the activity or not.



Description of Risks	Probability (P)	Severity (S)	Level of Risk (PxS)	Risk Rating	Controls	New Risk Rating	Leftover Risk

Step Three: Implement Controls

Develop an Action Plan to implement the controls needed to reduce the risk enough to make the activity safe and enjoyable.

An Action Plan needs to address:

1. What needs to be done?
2. Who is going to do it?
3. When is it going to be done?



Sample Action Plan

RISK AREA	ACTION PLAN	WHO	WHEN
Supervision - # leaders	Establish size of group and number of leaders needed	Jan Downing	June 15
Inspection of equipment	Poles... Footwear...	Jan	June 25
Emergency Response	Identify potential bear issues and...	Jan	June 24
Emergency Response	Communications – check that cell phone coverage works	Jan	June 20

Resources at www.rpay.ca

Yukon Community Recreation Leaders Guide

[Module 7 - Risk Management](#)

Contains links to many risk management resources

[Nordic Walking booklets, posters and forms](#)

Resources for Leaders

[RPAY's Website - Links and Resources](#)



Planning a Program

Set a Goal: Develop and maintain a Nordic Walking Group.

Set Objectives (to meet and monitor your goal):

- Promote your group through the local recreation department, by posters and newsletters, on community TV or radio, and using social media.
- Involve existing community groups, schools, First Nations, Seniors and Elders, organizations and workplaces.
- Offer an introductory workshop to help new participants learn proper technique.
- Walk with your group once or twice a week at the same time in the same location. Use a variety of walks and adapt for different levels of ability.
- Develop lesson plans for each class. A lesson plan helps you plan a progression from one class to the next.
- Encourage participants to use a log book or mobile app to record distances walked.
- Encourage goal setting or fun challenges using websites or mobile apps.
- Challenge participants to try a variety of walking routes using local maps.⁵

Secure funding: for poles and/or prizes through private businesses, sponsorship and grants.

Consider Safety:

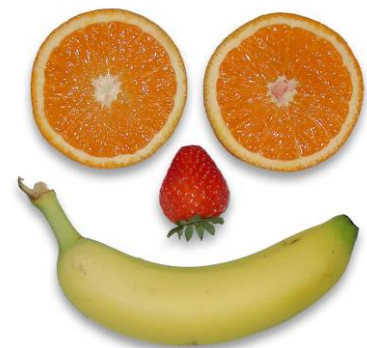
- If it is too cold in the winter, arrange to walk indoors in a school gym or community hall. Use the rubber indoor pole tips!
- Ensure participants wear reflectors and lights when they walking at night.
- Include a healthy snack or social activity as part of the program – make it fun! Check out the Yukon Government Health Promotion website⁶ for healthy snack ideas.

Evaluate the success of your program:

- Are you meeting your objectives and goals?
- Are people walking and seeing benefits?
- What worked and what needs to be re-worked?

Keep the program sustainable and exciting:

- Vary where you walk.
- Recruit new participants.
- Offer different incentives.



⁵ <http://www.rpay.ca/walking-be-active>

⁶ www.hss.gov.yk.ca/nutrition.php

Program Progression

When your program consists of more than one class, plan a progression to help participants develop their skills in a safe environment. Use your program and lesson plans to identify the rate of progress. Participants' skill level, fitness level and degree of comfort with the activity will influence their rate of learning. When you provide a safe learning environment, your participants will be more likely to progress.

The duration of each class will depend on what you plan to accomplish and the participants you target. Classes may be from one to two hours in length. The time spent walking will be shorter and may range from 30 to 60 minutes. For an introductory class, you may opt for two hours as time is needed to introduce equipment and proper technique. Plan your classes to introduce basic skills like timing and coordination, before moving on to more complex skills like power and propulsion. Be flexible and adapt to the needs of your participants.



When you plan your program, vary each lesson plan. Not only does this keep it interesting for participants, but it helps them to progress. Remember FITT and choose one element to vary each class. Changing more than one element at a time can make learning more difficult and may negatively influence your participants' confidence and progress.

F	• Frequency - increase the amount
I	• Intensity - increase the pace
T	• Terrain - increase the ups
T	• Type & Technique - add snowshoes or introduce Nordic striding

NORDIC WALKING – BEGINNER/NOVICE LEVEL

Duration:	45 minute class
Terrain:	easy to moderate, mostly level with slight up/down hills, no obstacles
Class Size:	Maximum 8 participants to allow for individual instruction on technique

PRE-NOTE: Mapping the Class

It is the instructor's responsibility to formulate a "route plan" before each class/program delivery. A pre-defined route is critical for leading a safe and well organized class.

Consider the following:

- Difficulty of route – terrain, grade, exposures (wind, water, sand, mud, logs, stumps, insects) and length of the route.
- Minimize the number of road crossings. When crossing is unavoidable, the instructor should function as the "crossing guard" until all participants are safely crossed.
- Locations of drinking water and restrooms, if in an urban setting.
- Nearest route to medical services - know the quickest and safest route to get medical treatment if required.

In addition to a well-planned route, the instructor should have a clear idea of the order of the class from introductions to cool down. It is beneficial to have 3-4 variations of a beginner class (3-4 routes) to offer variety and progression.

Getting Started

Once the class is in attendance, the following should be completed at the beginning of each class:

1. Introductions and equipment check; footwear, clothing, headwear, gloves, water bottles, snacks, poles and tips, etc.
2. Demonstrate pole adjustments as a review.
3. Demonstrate the technique(s) that the class will be using for the terrain and route for that class.
4. Remind participants to be self-aware of their body throughout the class and explain the talk test.
5. Briefly explain the class components (up-hill challenges, cardio challenges, intervals, some additional bodywork or agility moves, endurance).
6. Note the weather and point out any possible concerns (strong winds, over-heating in hot temperatures, cold and icy conditions, rain and slippery terrain).
7. Fully explain the route, estimated time or distance, landmarks, and expected return time and location.
8. Always discuss the group safety plan in case someone needs to stop or turn back.

CLASS FORMAT

Prepared by:



5 minutes **WARM UP**

Begin with a slow to moderate paced 2-3 minute warm-up walk, reviewing technique and testing terrain. Group up after the first 2-3 minutes and lead participants through full body warm up elements. Assist the participants on achieving balanced upper and lower body muscle recruitment.

5 minutes **INTERVAL Nordic walking**

Alternate 1-2 minutes of faster paced walking followed with 1-2 minutes of slower recovery periods to gradually build up the heart rate and to fully warm the body.

20-30 minutes **CLASS CORE**

This is the segment of the class to focus on building **ENDURANCE, STRENGTH** and **PACE**. Cue on technique and allow the class to focus on building strong and comfortable strides and arm swings. Offer poling suggestions, relaxing the grip, shoulder and hip placements in posture, breathing patterns, etc.

Other additions that can be worked into this segment include:

- Body work – small sets of squats or walking lunges
- Agility – small sets of single leg balances, leg lifts, side stepping, 2 foot bunny jumps, etc.
- Mindfulness – point out the beauty of the terrain, the green of the leaves, the sound of the rain, how the sun feels warm on your face, etc.

5 minutes **COOL-DOWN**

Gradually decrease the pace to allow heart rates to slow. Cool-downs are extremely important in preparing the body for post-exercise. It should gradually decrease heart rates, blood pressure and blood flow. Stopping abruptly disturbs the body's natural cool-down process.

5 minutes **STRETCHING**

Include the elements listed in the manual and add some of your own stretches. Use a combination of dynamic stretches (moving stretches) and static stretches (stationary stretches). Emphasize deep, slow and controlled breathing. Invite participants to breathe, relax, and feel proud of their accomplishment. Emphasize the “good-feelings” in their body from completing the exercise. Reinforcement the benefits of regular exercise and healthy choices by discussing a specific topic or by providing a little healthy “FIT FACT” while stretching.

Always THANK the participants for attending your class. 😊

SAMPLE First Nordic Walking Lesson Plan

Level: Beginner

Duration: 1 hour

10 minutes - Introductions - instructor and participants - Distribute poles and/or check poles for correct type, length and tip – reminders about hydration and snacks – check for appropriate footwear and clothing – provide tips for clothing and footwear – explain goals for the day and future lessons, i.e. Learn the basic technique today and then begin a regular series of workouts progressing from easy to more challenging

5 minutes – introduce/review - Nordic walking – history and benefits

5 minutes – warm up walk on easy terrain without using poles – carry at midpoint of shaft

10 minutes – adjust poles for length and explain why - adjust straps and show correct way to use straps and why – check for appropriate tips and position of tips

5 minutes – stretches as per hand book – slow motions, breathe out while stretching, in while relaxing

2 minutes - instruction – timing and coordination – demo once – start group on flat or slight uphill – use a 20 – 30 metre circuit and watch group as they try the exercise – note if anybody is doing it correctly and encourage individual to continue - give general feedback such as – ‘good work’, ‘nice try’

5 minutes -continue with progressions - use the same circuit – demo walking without poles but holding them at the balance point and walking naturally with arm swinging in time with feet – then ask group to do the same – at this stage you want to make sure that everybody has good timing – work with individuals until timing is correct – those that have correct timing can have a break or give them a challenge – walk to point ‘x’ and back while you work with remaining group

3 minutes - add walking with poles on but dragging them – keep timing and coordination – add next progression when ready – putting some weight on poles and pushing off

10 minutes – slow Nordic walking over varied terrain – instructor provide feedback individually while walking

5 minutes – cool down – stretches – mental imaging of correct pole angle – Q&A period and feedback regarding intensity of the workout – Was it too little? Was it too much?

SAMPLE First Nordic Walking Lesson Plan

Level: Beginner

Duration: 50 minutes

5 minutes - check poles for correct type, length and tip – reminders about hydration and snacks – check for appropriate footwear and clothing – provide tips for clothing and footwear – explain goals for the day - review technique – and walk continuously for 15 minutes over easy terrain

5 minutes – warm up walk on easy terrain without using poles – carry at midpoint of shaft

5 minutes – adjust poles for length, adjust straps and review correct way to use straps and why – check for appropriate tips and position of tips

5 minutes – stretches as per hand book

10 minutes –review technique – correct problems and answer questions – add demo for downhill and practice

15 minutes – Nordic walking over easy terrain – instructor provides feedback individually while walking – monitor for breathing – carry on a conversation and discuss heart rate targets etc.

5 minutes – cool down – stretches – mental imaging of timing/coordination i.e. pole touching ground at same time as the opposite foot – Question and Answer period and feedback regarding intensity of the workout. Was it too little? Was it too much? Discuss the goal for next lesson (e.g. continuous walking for 20 minutes)

Sample Forms

Several forms are included in this section for leaders who deliver programs through RPAY. Space for additional content (such as work phone or cell phone) may be added to a form if necessary. RPAY also offers these sample forms online. For forms and programming information, browse through the links and resources section of RPAY's website.⁷

For sample forms and waivers from across the country, go to the Leisure Information Network and search "forms".⁸

Leaders who are not offering programs through RPAY are asked to modify the forms accordingly. Reference to RPAY and funders (logos, wording, etc.) should be removed before these forms are reproduced.

Registration Form

- You may want to include extra space for health information and/or concerns, or ask participants to complete a PAR-Q which you can download from www.csep.ca

SAMPLE Agreement and Release of Liability

- This form was provided by Lisa-Marie Vowk of Optimum Fitness. It includes questions from the PAR-Q. Alternatively, you can reproduce the Release of Liability and print your own PAR-Q form which can be downloaded from www.csep.ca

Evaluation Form

- Consider modifying this form to ensure you get answers to the right questions... An evaluation should help you understand what you might change to make the program even better next time!

Photo Release Form

- Photo release forms should be collected when participants register for your program. If anyone does not give their permission, do not keep or share any photos in which they appear.

⁷ <http://www.rpay.ca/category/programming-resources>

⁸ <http://lin.ca/>

Registration Form



Date: _____ Program: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Community: _____

Email address: _____

Please indicate... Gender: Female Male

Age range: up to 12 13 - 19 20 – 35 35 – 54 55 + better

Do you have children under the age of 18 living at home? Yes No

Please indicate if applicable... First Nation ancestry Newcomer to Canada

Have you participated in RPAY's programs before? yes no

How did you find out about this program?

Use this space for other information you may want to collect. For example:

- Are there any medical conditions such as allergies?
- What is the contact information for a parent or guardian?
- Who is the emergency contact?

For more sample forms, go to the Leisure Information Network⁹ and search "forms".

⁹ <http://lin.ca/>

ASSUMPTION OF RISK

Nordic Walking is an excellent way to become and stay active to achieve a healthy lifestyle. As, one might expect, there is an element of risk involved with any physical activity program.

I am aware that participating in the activity of Nordic walking has many inherent risks, including but not limited to:

- TERRAIN – injury due to falls on uneven, steep, icy or slippery roads and trails
- WEATHER - injury or illness resulting from exposure to cold, wet or windy weather, or the effects of heat and strong sunlight.
- EQUIPMENT - injury resulting from use, misuse, non-use and failure of any equipment.
- REMOTENESS - the possibility of becoming lost and inability to access medical help in an emergency.
- WILD ANIMALS - curious or aggressive wildlife may include bears, carnivores, ticks, insects domestic or non-domestic animals.
- HAZARDS OF TRAVEL - the possibility of sudden impact with terrain features may result in bodily injury or death caused by, but not limited to: a) making contact with rocks, trees, obstructions and other participants, visible or non-visible, b) entanglement or impalement, c) motor vehicles.
- PERSONAL HEALTH – injury or illness as a result of poor fitness levels and/or pre-existing medical conditions

Although the risk is greatly reduced with the use of safety equipment, proper supervision, training and skilled leaders, there still remains the risk of injury during participation in Nordic walking programs.

I freely accept and fully assume all such risks, dangers and hazards and the possibility of personal injury, death, property damage or loss, resulting therefrom.

Name of Participant: _____

Address: _____

Signature: _____

Evaluation Form



Date: _____

Program: _____

Name: _____

Community: _____

1. Overall, what did you like best about this program?

2. What do you think would improve the program?

3. In what ways did this program help you to be physically active and eat healthy?

Below is a list of some of the benefits people may have experienced by participating in the program. Please check any which benefit you.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I made new friends | <input type="checkbox"/> I am more aware of how healthy eating helps me be healthy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am more aware of how physical activity helps me to healthy | <input type="checkbox"/> My lungs and heart feel better from being active |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have improved my muscle strength | <input type="checkbox"/> I enjoyed trying a new activity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I learned new skills | <input type="checkbox"/> I lost weight |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have more support for leading a healthy lifestyle | <input type="checkbox"/> I find that I am sleeping better |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have improved my flexibility | <input type="checkbox"/> I am making healthier food choices |

Photo Release Form



I hereby give permission to the Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon to record my/our photograph(s). I understand that the likeness of me may be used by RPAY and RPAY's funders in a number of ways such as websites, publications or advertising, provision of information to the public, and/or promotion of programs and activities to promote active, healthy lifestyles.

I acknowledge I have read and understood the contents of this form. I hereby release the above-noted organization, its employees, agents, subcontractors and funders from any and all claims, actions and liability for damages, losses or expenses of any sort which may arise in connection with the use of these likenesses or recorded stories.

I hereby give my consent, dated this _____ day of _____ 201_____

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Name of organization (if applicable) _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian
if subject is under age 19: _____

Photo(s) Name/Number:

Resources and Handouts for Leaders

Recreation Leaders

Yukon Community Recreation Leaders Guide available online at www.rpay.ca/guide

Nordic Walking Websites

www.abc-of-nordicwalking.com

www.nordicwalkingonline.com

www.nordicwalkingusa.com

www.timberdoodleoutdoors.com/nwa

Videos and DVDs

ExerStrider Total Fitness/Total Body Exercise Video by Tim Rutlin

<https://www.walkingpoles.com/shop/how-it-works>

Part 1: www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWKqAYw2r0g

Part 2: www.youtube.com/watch?v=idQ_loi1NVc

Nordic Walking: The Ultimate Fitness Experience

www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQXZHqkS3J0

Nordic Ski Walking: This video opens with an introductory lesson for beginners and progresses to more advanced techniques.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zhmdIM_eeA&feature=youtu.be

Books

Tim “T-Bone” Arem. Nordic Walking; a Total Body Experience. 2006

Klaus Schwanbeck. Ultimate Nordic Pole Walking Book. 2012

Suzanne Nottingham. Nordic Walking for Total Fitness. 2009

My Notes