

What is Nordic Walking and Why Should it Interest Me?

Quite simply, Nordic walking could be described as WALKING PLUS +

Unlike walking, or even running, Nordic walking, or walking with poles provides you with a whole-body exercise - lower body, upper body, plus a great aerobic workout - comparable to cross-country skiing

Nordic walking, or pole walking is really taking off in Europe. Millions are participating in this great, whole-body exercise. More and more people in the U.S. are also discovering it and wondering why they haven't started Nordic walking before.

In most countries the English name - Nordic walking - has been adopted and kept, but the Swedes have dubbed it stavgång, in Norway and Denmark it is stavgang, and to the Estonians it is kepikõnd.

If you already walk, power walk, hike, run, or cycle, Nordic walking will enhance your fitness level. In addition, walking with poles is a lot more interesting and engrossing than plain walking.

It also saves wear and tear on your legs and knees, while providing balanced exercise for both your lower and upper body.

Haven't you ever wondered if it would be possible to also exercise your arms, back, abs, shoulders and chest, while walking? As it turns out - you CAN!

You can really put your upper body to work, while walking, instead of trying to tone it with those puny, little weights that some people use when walking and running.

When you finish your Nordic walk you don't have to hit the weight room. You don't have to get down and do ab crunches. You've got it all done in one nice package: cardio, upper and lower body workout, while burning more (up to 500 per hour) calories.

One of the advantages of Nordic walking is that you get more exercise, with less of a perceived effort, which should help you stick with the activity.

Find out during our free instructional demo sessions and classes why cross-country skiers (and now Nordic walkers as well) are considered to be some of the best-conditioned athletes around, or simply get some poles and read the many instructional articles on this site and learn to Nordic walk on your own.

You could, I suppose get by by modifying a pair of ski poles, or making something from scratch, but well-designed Nordic walking poles are really a much better and a more elegant solution.

Walking, with the active aid of Nordic walking poles gives you a considerably better cardio workout than plain walking, while exercising some 90 percent of the body's muscles. And remember that the more muscle you have (within reason, of course), the more calories your body burns.

The markedly higher calorie consumption during Nordic walking, as compared to plain walking, or even power walking, provides one of the best weight loss strategies around. Most people can walk much farther and longer than they could ever run, burning more calories in the process, and as a bonus exercising both the lower and the upper parts of their bodies.

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Although some people in the US have expressed the opinion that walking with two poles is silly, my question is whether walking with one pole, or a cane looks better? The answer is an unequivocal - No way!

The single pole seems to be the prerogative of someone infirm, or suffering from leg problems, and walking with two poles is obviously a sports/fitness activity and a useful and effective one to boot.

Well over half a million Finns have embraced pole-walking in recent years, together with some three million Germans and Austrians, plus hundreds of

thousands in Switzerland, Sweden, Norway and now also in America. The activity is growing by leaps and bounds. Why? Because it is fairly easy, fun and very effective.

An added advantage of pole-walking, or Nordic walking for nervous urbanites in particular, is that it gives you two pointy sticks for defense against urban scum and the likes of bulls and mad dogs when rambling alone in the countryside.

Faced with frightening national statistics on the rise of chronic illness, back problems and obesity, more and more German insurers are subsidizing the cost of Nordic walking fitness courses. The aim is to prevent more expensive-to-treat ailments, such as diabetes, heart disease and slipped discs, down the road. Many German doctors are actually writing PRESCRIPTIONS for Nordic walking poles.

Studies have tied Nordic walking to improvements in areas as diverse as cardiac health, Parkinson's disease, migraines, post-op recovery, spinal cord mobility - even impotence.

Nordic walking is also a phenomenal activity for seniors, many of whom have mobility issues.

For seniors, the extra stability provided by two additional points of contact with the ground is helpful, even if they don't put much effort into the pole motion.

You in effect become a quadruped, using all four of your appendages, more like a cat, than a clumsy human.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

My name is Marek Zalewski. I have lived in Vienna, Virginia since 1985. Before that, for quite a few years in the Boston, Massachusetts area, a few years in Venezuela and for the first 13 years of my life, in Warsaw, Poland. Because we seldom get enough snow in Northern Virginia for cross-country skiing, (which I love to do) I started Nordic walking and never looked back since.