

Walking and Hiking with Poles

Why should I use walking and hiking poles?

Using walking and hiking poles can be a wise choice for active people with mild to moderate arthritis of the hip or knee. Walking with poles can:

- relieve strain on your knees, hips, ankles and back
- improve your balance
- help tone your upper body
- burn up to 40% more calories than walking alone and it doesn't feel like you're working that much harder!

How do I walk with poles?

Most people swing their arms when they walk. Walking with poles is the same movement. You step one leg forward and swing the opposite arm and pole forward at the same time. The right pole moves with the left leg. The left pole moves with the right leg.

Start slowly! Using poles works more muscles than regular walking. **Begin by walking only 1/3 of your regular distance!**



Why should I use two poles?

Two poles are better than one! Using two poles makes you more stable and takes more pressure off of your sore joints.

Can I use my poles on trails or on paved roads?



Both! Poles made for fitness walking often have carbide tips for gripping natural trails and rubber tips for walking on paved roads. The rubber tips are removable and fit over the carbide tips. Rubber tips that are shaped like a "paw" are often easier to use on paved roads as they hit the road at an angle.

How tall should my poles be?

Your poles should be *roughly* 70% of your body height. Multiply your height in inches or centimeters by 0.7 to get your pole height in the same units. For example: if you are 5 foot 8 inches; multiply 68 inches (your height in inches) by 0.7 to equal 47.6 inches (the length of your poles). *Or you can measure from the floor to your elbow crease to find correct length.*

My poles should be _____ inches/cm long

Where can I find pole walking classes?

Look for Nordic Walking classes at your local community centre, gym, fitness centre or running store. It's a great way to learn the correct technique and meet others who enjoy walking for fitness.

Where can I buy walking or hiking poles?

Walking poles are sold at most fitness stores. Hiking poles are sold at outdoor stores.