



Nordic Walking and leisure knowledge enhancement ♥

HANDBOOK

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About the Project

Families across Europe are leading sedentary lifestyles and spending family time on phones, televisions, and other screens, without sufficient physical activity. The project focuses on families and their involvement in shared activities through Nordic Walking — aiming to change their daily habits toward better, healthier, and more meaningful leisure time while strengthening family bonds. The goal is to replace screen time with time spent outdoors, in the fresh air and nature.

The main objectives of the project are:

- To create a unifying and health-promoting activity for all family members, while also developing a network of professionals dedicated to supporting a healthy lifestyle.
- To motivate and engage all family members in spending quality time together outdoors.
- To develop a healthy program for families, with Nordic Walking as its core element.
- To build a network of professionals, trainers, and instructors at the European level.

Outputs:

- The **WALKERS Handbook**
- Organization of an international mobility event for 24 participants — families from three EU countries
- An international final conference for 35 sports trainers, instructors, and educators

Partners

ACTIVE Austria is dedicated to creating inclusive and unprejudiced environments in sport, with a strong focus on community engagement and equal opportunities for all. Recognizing the barriers many people—especially those from migrant and diverse backgrounds—face in accessing sport, ACTIVE Austria works to make physical activity more welcoming and accessible. Through practical programs, workshops, and local initiatives, the organization promotes participation, social connection, and active living for everyone. Beyond sports, ACTIVE Austria aims to strengthen community ties, support integration, and encourage healthy lifestyles. By collaborating with local clubs, schools, and community organizations, they build sustainable partnerships that foster inclusion and long-term impact.



Daddyhood Croatia is a non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting active and engaged fatherhood, emphasising the importance of fathers in the lives of their children and advocating for equal parenting roles. Founded by Marino Manzoni from Croatia and Thomas Pickelner from Sweden, Daddyhood Croatia (part of Daddyhood Europe). Organises events such as the Daddyhood Dadathlon—a series of sports challenges like running, cycling, and hiking for fathers and their children—to inspire families to lead healthy, active lifestyles together. The organisation's mission is to break down traditional stereotypes about parenting, support fathers in becoming positive role models, and foster strong family bonds through shared activities and community.



Slovenská asociácia Nordic Walking is the founder of Nordic walking in Slovakia. Educates instructors, guides, and the general public, promoting the development of Nordic Walking both in Slovakia and worldwide. Organizes numerous events focused on a healthy lifestyle across generations, both domestically and abroad.



The project is funded through the **Erasmus+ grant scheme**.

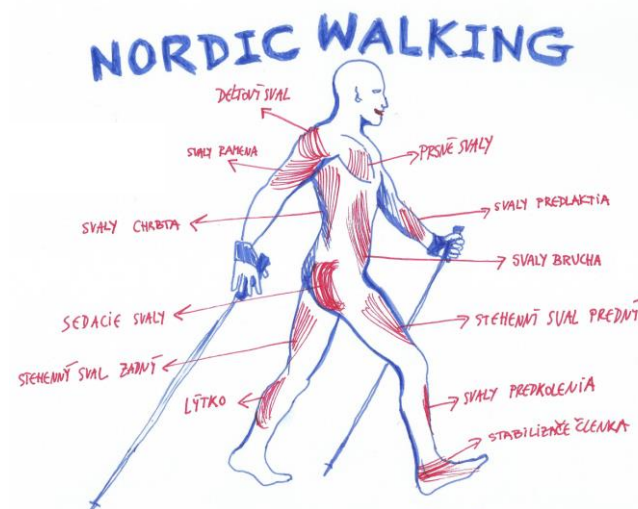
Erasmus+ is a European Union program that supports education, vocational training, youth, and sport.

The main mission of Erasmus+ is:

- Study and internships abroad – enabling students from secondary schools and universities to go on short-term or long-term stays in another European country (and sometimes outside Europe).
- Youth exchanges and volunteering – young people can participate in international projects, develop skills, and experience other cultures.
- Training and cooperation for teachers and trainers – the program also supports education professionals, allowing them to take part in courses or internships.
- Support for innovation and partnerships – projects between schools, universities, companies, or non-profits receive funding.

What is Nordic Walking?

- Walking with the correct technique using special poles (not trekking poles).
- A safe, simple, effective, and fun way to improve health and fitness.
- Suitable regardless of age, gender, or physical ability, including older adults and people with health limitations.
- For anyone who wants to stay active outdoors throughout the year.

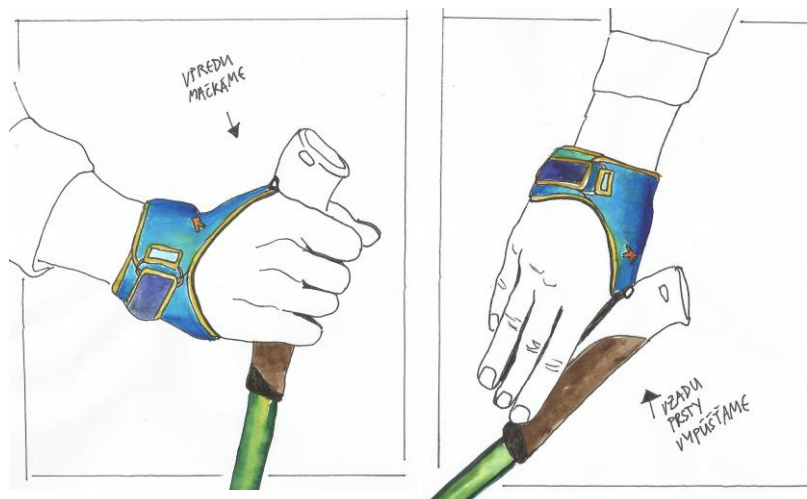


90% of the body's muscles

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Nordic Walking Poles

- Special strap/glove that wraps around the entire hand.
- Adjustable pole length according to the person's height.
- Sharp tips.
- Safety rubber caps for the tips.



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History of Nordic Walking

1930 – Finnish cross-country skiers used classic ski poles for summer training.

1966–1991 – Finnish pioneer Leena Jääskeläinen taught walking with ski poles in primary, secondary, and higher education, and promoted Nordic walking in the media.

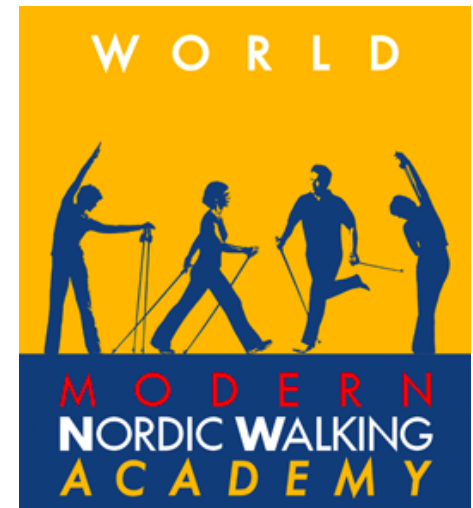
1987 – Tuomo Jantunen organized the first public Nordic walking competition in Finland.

1996 – The first official poles suitable for Nordic walking were manufactured.

2000 – Founding of INWA (International Nordic Walking Association) and the first applied research conducted at the Cooper Institute (USA).

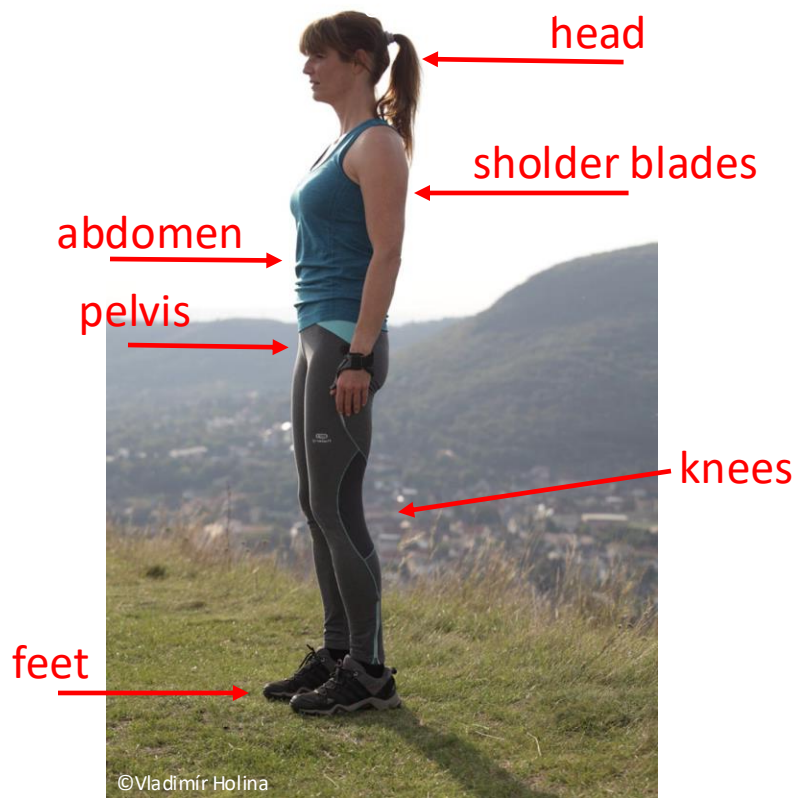
2013 – Establishment of SNWA (Slovak Nordic Walking Association).

2016 – Establishment of ICNW (International Academy of Modern NW).



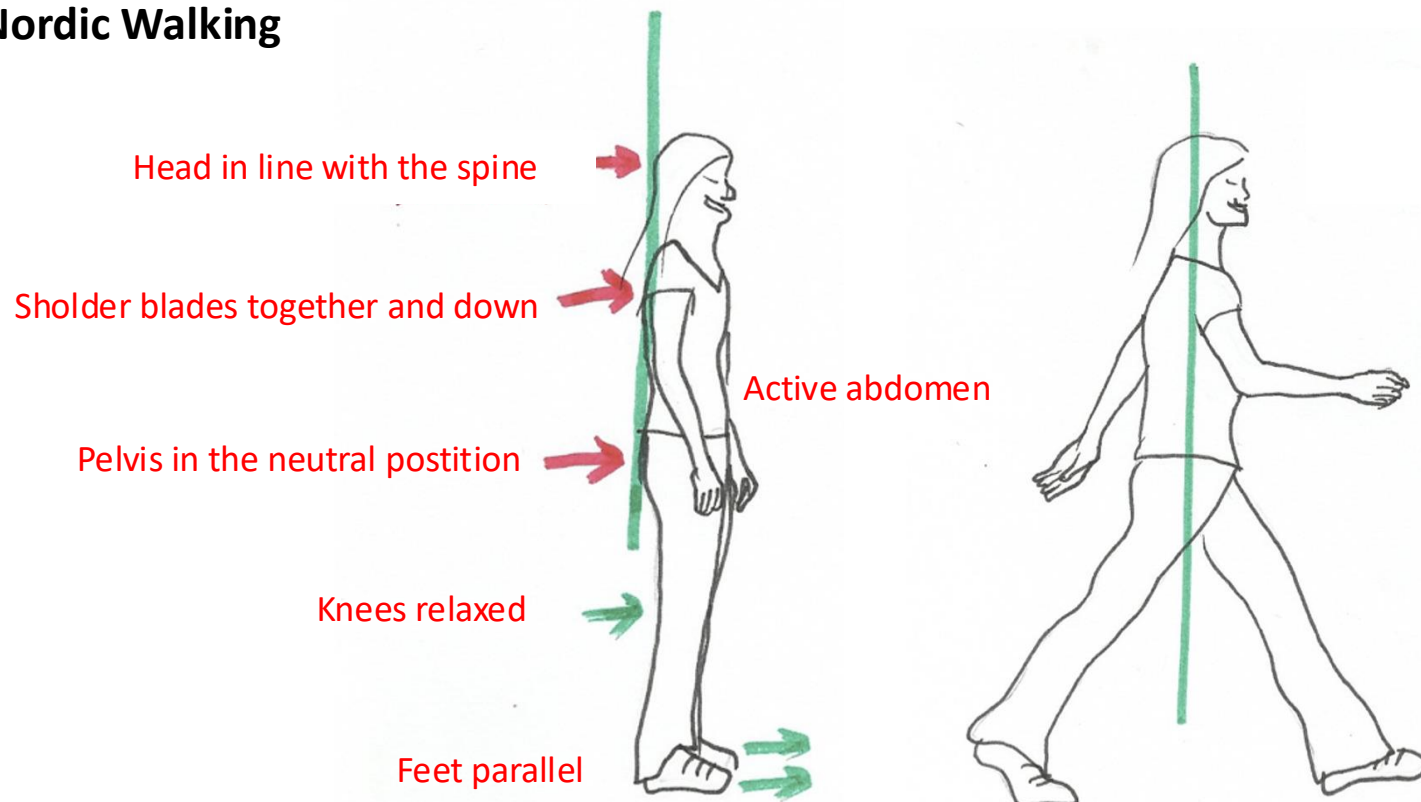
Technique of Nordic Walking

1, active posture



Technique of Nordic Walking

2, walking

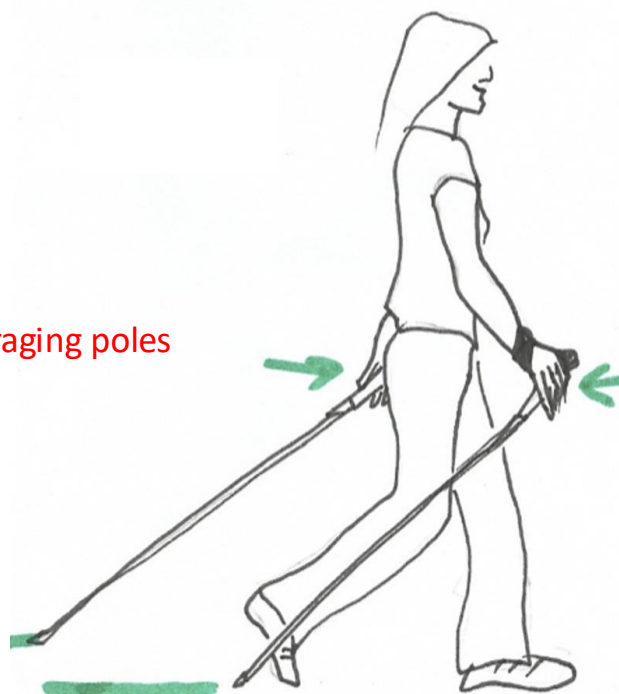


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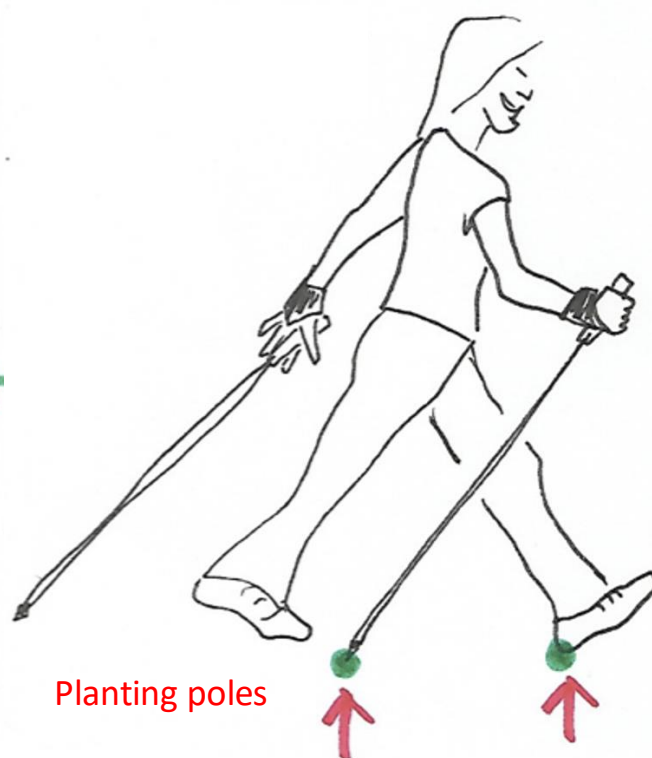
Technique of Nordic Walking

3A, work with poles

Dragging poles



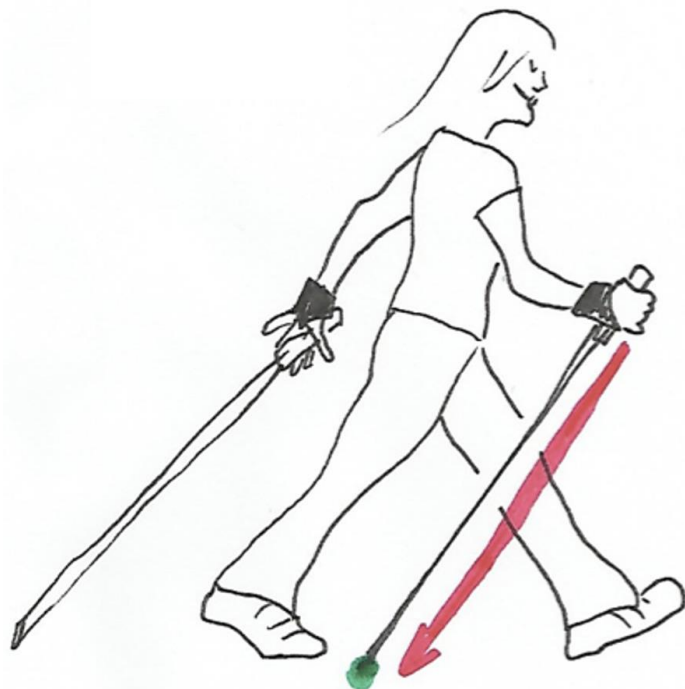
Planting poles



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Technique of Nordic Walking

3B, work with poles



Pushing poles

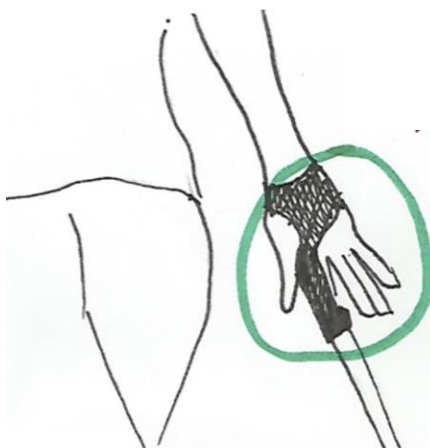


Extend fully

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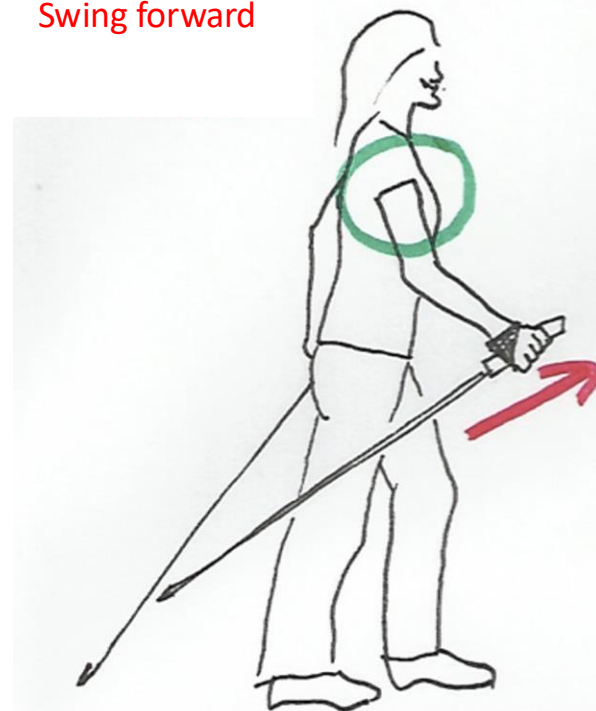
Technique of Nordic Walking

3C, work with poles



Release actively

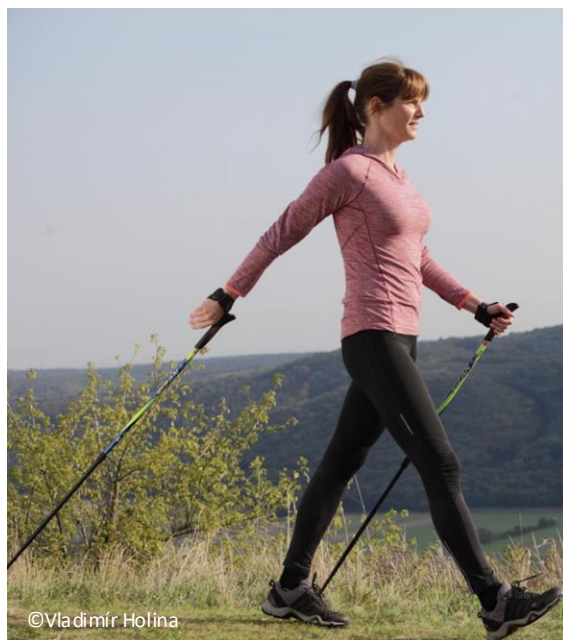
Swing forward



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Release actively fingers.



Large arm range backward.



Work of the arms from the shoulder, not the elbow.

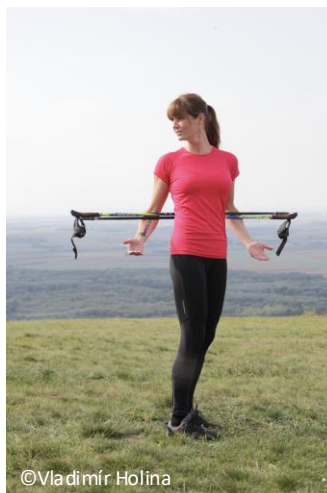
Nordic Walking warm-up for beginning of the lesson



Rocking from heels to toes.



Front and back kicks.



Twisting the back to both sides.



Side bends to both sides.



Wrist rotations in both directions.

Nordic Walking stretching for end of the lesson



Calf stretches.



Glute stretches.



Thigh stretches.



Shoulder and triceps stretches.



Neck stretches.

Fun Exercises of nordic walking



Running to the next pole. Each participant places one pole vertically on the ground, and on the signal, the pole stays in place while we run to the next one.

Exercise duration: 5 minutes
Age: children from 5 years old



Throwing poles into a circle. Stand in a circle and throw the pole to one side, catching it from the other side, and vice versa.

Exercise duration: 5 minutes
Age: children from 7 years old

Fun Exercises of nordic walking



Poles Track.

We build a track out of poles and crawl under, climb over, do slalom, jump, etc.

Exercise time: 15 minutes

Age: children from 3 years old.

Fun Exercises of nordic walking



Train. We hold onto each other using poles and walk in the correct rhythm, e.g., opposite hand and foot forward.

Exercise time: 10 minutes
Age: children from 5 years old.



Ladder. We place the poles on the ground and walk or jump over them with one or both feet, forward, backward, etc.

Exercise time: 10 minutes
Age: children from 5 years old.

Fun Exercises of nordic walking



Cross. We place the poles on the ground in a cross shape. On the signal, we jump over them at the same time—one foot, the other foot, both feet, forward, backward.

Exercise time: 5 minutes
Age: children from 3 years old.



Jumping. On the signal, we jump up, switching feet. Together, on one foot, or see who can jump the highest. The poles provide support.

Exercise time: 5 minutes
Age: children from 3 years old.

Fun Exercises of nordic walking



Throws I. Each child has one pole, and on the signal, we throw them at the same time. First with the same hand, then we switch sides.

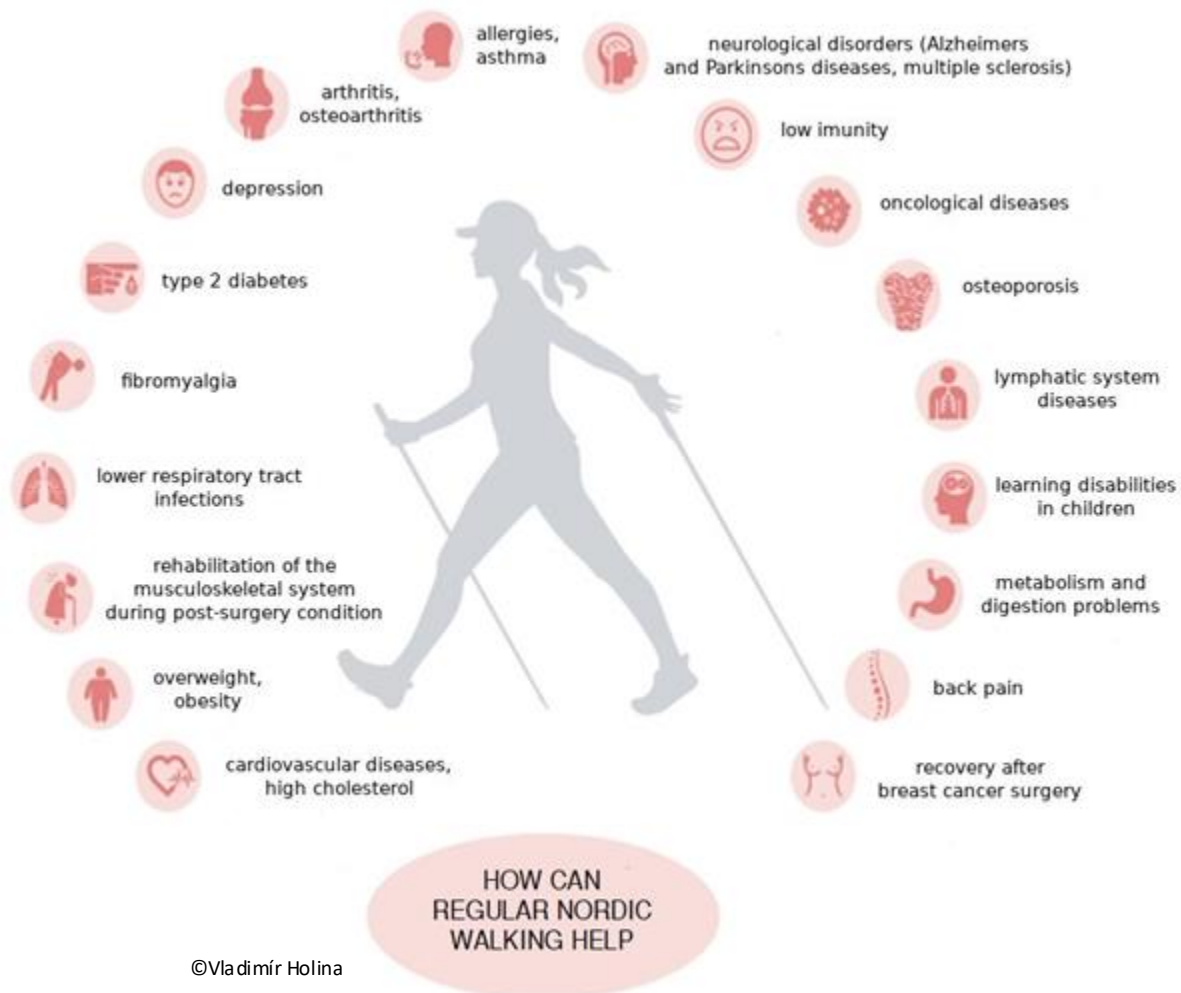
Exercise time: 5 minutes
Age: children from 7 years old.



Throws II. Each child has one pole, and on the signal, we throw them at the same time. First, one from above and the other from below, then we switch positions.

Exercise time: 5 minutes
Age: children from 7 years old.

Health benefits of Nordic Walking



Routes and Nordic Walking

For Nordic walking, it is important that the route allows a natural, smooth movement with the poles while maintaining proper technique.

Suitable routes:

- Forest and field paths – soft natural surfaces are gentle on the joints and comfortable for walking.
- Park paths – paved but not too hard, often with gentle inclines.
- Routes with mild ascents and descents – support fitness and movement variety.
- Wide paths – allow comfortable use of poles without restrictions.
- Around lakes, educational trails, meadow paths – aesthetically pleasing surroundings motivate and make the training more enjoyable.

Asphalt and concrete – recommended for short walks (around 15 minutes). The vibrations help strengthen bones (calcium formation). For longer walks, they can cause knee or hip pain; rubber tips on the poles are recommended in this case.

Unsuitable routes:

- Narrow, overgrown paths – poles can catch on vegetation, disrupting rhythm.
- Steep slopes and rocky terrain – increase the risk of slipping, overload the ankles, and prevent proper technique.
- Busy roads and paths – heavy traffic from cyclists, runners, or tourists can reduce safety.
- Slippery surfaces – reduce stability and impair technique efficiency.

How to Plan a Nordic Walking Trip

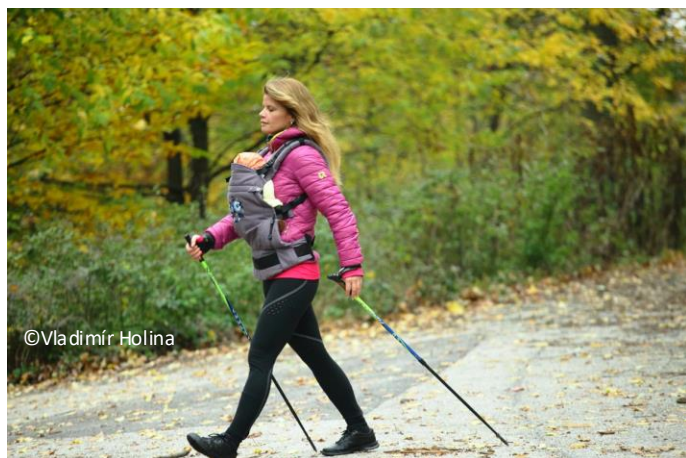
When planning a Nordic Walking trip, it is important to:

- Estimate the duration of the trip (the larger the group, the longer it will take to complete the route).
- Assess the difficulty of the route based on the age, fitness level of participants, and weather conditions.
- Identify and mark locations along the route such as cabins, guesthouses, cafés, restaurants, and toilets.
- Check for a medic in the group or consider hiring one.
- Prepare a backup plan in case you need to cut the trip short (weather, injury, or unforeseen circumstances).
- Don't forget a fully charged mobile phone, a headlamp, and a portable first aid kit.

Digital tools:

Online and offline maps (also available as apps) can help you plan your route. For example,

www.mapy.com



Author: Lucia Turaz Okoličány, president
Slovak Nordic Walking Association
Rudolfa Močka 2/A, 841 04 Bratislava, Slovakia
Phone.: +421 905 601 914
lucia@snwa.sk
www.snwa.sk



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