



This article contains general information dealing with health and wellness. It does not constitute medical advice and should not be relied on for diagnosing or treating any illness, injury or disease.

February 28, 2024

Boost Your Walk with Nordic Poles

Many years ago, I really enjoyed running. However, after a couple of car accidents and a back surgery, I had to stop running due to the impact on my spine. Walking was fine. It just did not get my heart rate up too much. Therefore, I tried Nordic walking and I loved it!

Nordic walking uses two specially designed poles to work the upper body while walking. The movement is similar to cross-country skiing in that your arms use the poles to match each stride you take.

How Nordic Walking Boosts Your Walking Workout

According to this article by Harvard Health: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/exercise-and-fitness/fitness-trend-nordic-walking>, Nordic walking combines cardiovascular exercise with a vigorous muscle workout for your shoulders, arms, core and legs. Regular walking mostly activates the muscles below your waist. By adding Nordic poles, you activate most of the muscles of the upper body as well; 80% to 90% of muscles versus only 50% during regular walking. Not only does this improve overall strength and muscle mass, but it certainly provides a higher calorie burning experience! The article above quotes that Nordic Walking burns 18% to 67% more calories than regular walking.

Nordic walking is a more complete body workout. For example, Nordic walking increases your heart rate without increasing your perceived rate of exertion. This means you are getting a better work out without

feeling like you are working that much harder. Walking with poles engages the arms, shoulders, and back muscles with a brisk, pumping motion in each step.

Other benefits include:

- Core muscle strengthening
- Reduces stress on the hips, knees and ankles
- Provides stability and balance
- Improves posture
- If done properly, it can relieve tension in the neck and shoulders
- Provides resistance training
- Easy to learn and suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels

How do I get started?

A quick search on Amazon reveals that you can get starter poles for \$40 to \$50 dollars. Add a good pair of walking shoes and the right outerwear and you are almost there!

Below are two instructional videos found on YouTube on how to use your poles. Pole manufacturers also tend to have videos on their websites. You could also visit an outdoor gear store such as Mountain Equipment Co-op where you may find someone on staff to give you pointers!

This three-minute video provides a great explanation of adjusting and sizing poles as well as how to properly use them in your stride: [How to Nordic Pole Walk](#)

This video helps break down the arm, pole, stride combination in progressive building steps if you feel you still need a bit more instruction to get into the swing of things: [How to Nordic Walk with Urban Poles](#)

Take your walk to the next level...

When running is too extreme on your knees, ankles, spine, or other joints, walking poles offer a happy medium. You can still enjoy a walk that is easier on your joints at a faster pace, if you so desire, and get an added boost in health benefits!

Other Sources:

<https://sportmedbc.com/article/nordic-walking-canadas-hottest-new-fitness-trend/>

<https://www.verywellfit.com/nordic-walking-3432907>

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Morandini', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rochelle Morandini

Member Health & Well-Being, Director

If you would like to contribute or have ideas about what you would like to see in the ReFresh series, we would love to hear from you: contact rochelle@bcpvpa.bc.ca.