



# Beginners Guide to Viking Hiking

Nordic Walking is simple, effective and an easy way to enhance your normal walking routine, or start a new one. By using the poles you transform a walk into a full body workout by engaging more muscle groups and so burn more calories.

## Stick Height

Adjustable poles are available from many online retailers (make sure you get a pair as some sticks are sold singly). To find the correct height, bring your elbows in to your waist with forearms at a right angle. Adjust the size of your sticks so that the handles line up with your hands comfortably in this position. Using the wrist straps ensures you don't drop the sticks if you let go.

## Technique

Start by dragging the poles behind you as you walk, using long strides and rolling from the heel to the ball of your foot. With your arms close to your side gradually start to swing the arms as normal, then start using the sticks to push off the ground behind you and propel you forward. The body is leaning slightly forward, shoulders relaxed and head up. If you lose the rhythm then drop the sticks and let them drag behind you again to restart. This will soon begin to feel more natural. Using the wrist straps gives you a more secure grip and makes it easier to restart if you drop the poles.

## Start

Warm up by rolling the shoulder backwards and forwards a few times to loosen them off and get rid of any tension. Loosen off your ankles by circling your foot in both directions and repeat to the other side. A slow 'jogging' movement on the spot will warm up the ankles and front of the foot ready for you walk.

## After the Walk

Stretching the calf muscles, quads and inside of the thighs in the same ways we do at the end of Jympa classes will prevent muscle stiffness and improve your flexibility. You can also use the sticks to stretch out the back muscles. Walk the sticks as far out in front of you as you can, bending from the waist and let yourself 'hang' there. Walk the sticks back in to come upright again. Then hold the both sticks together horizontally in front of you, raise them up above your head, reaching up as high as you can. Gently lean to one side, come back to the centre and then lean to the opposite side. Repeat a few times on each side.

## Benefits Of Nordic Walking

- trains the whole body
- up to 55% more effective than ordinary walking
- helps take the pressure off hips, knees and ankles
- promotes a good posture
- burns an average of 120 kcal more per hour than ordinary walking
- balance and co-ordination improve
- easier to get uphill and to go downhill more safely
- less risk of slipping on mud, ice or wet leaves
- fresh air



## Stretches

