

# Urban Poling/Nordic Walking Information



- **Urban Poling** combines the aerobic and strength building benefits of cross country skiing with the lower body technique of regular walking
- Why just walk when you can **Urban Pole**? By adding poles you turn a walk into a full body workout using 90% of the body's muscles
- Walking with poles has been popular in Scandinavian countries for years and is becoming more popular in North America as people become aware of the health benefits
- It is a great activity because it can be performed by people of all ages and almost all fitness levels. It is a safe, effective, low impact, and an inexpensive way to exercise
- **Urban Poling** can be done almost anywhere.... sidewalks, parks, hiking trails and indoor tracks

## Older Adults

The poles provide additional balance, stability and increases confidence during walking for those people who need it, such as Older Adults or people recovering from injury or surgery. Using the poles promotes a more normal step pattern in terms of heel toe stride and more even weight bearing versus using a cane. Walking with **Urban Poles** is a low impact activity reducing the stress on the back, hips, and knees. Using poles for walking has a significant effect in terms of exercise tolerance, perceived functional independence and quality of life.

## Research

**Urban Poling** increases both caloric expenditure and oxygen consumptions by 20 to 46%. Heart rates are increased from 5 – 17 beats per minute with moderate to vigorous walking compared to walkers not using poles. The use of walking poles enables participants to walk at a faster speed with reduced vertical ground reaction forces, vertical knee joint reaction forces and supported movement. **Urban Poling** is very effective for core strengthening, upper body strengthening as well as improving posture.

## Who is suitable for Urban Poling?

- People interested in a convenient, low-impact activity
- Avid Walkers looking for something different for a full body workout
- Walkers who don't enjoy or who don't have the time for traditional upper body resistance training
- People in weight loss programs
- People recently recovered from lower body injuries
- People who want to cross train
- People with balance and step difficulties



# PROPER POLING TECHNIQUE

The sport of Urban Poling is a fun and easy activity for people of all ages. As with any new pursuit you will need to master the proper technique to become a proficient poler. Since we've all mastered regular walking, all that is left to learn is how to coordinate the poles with our leg movements. It is not uncommon for people to feel uncoordinated a first. But with a little practice walking with poles will become second nature.

To begin:

1. Start walking without the poles. Take a few steps and notice that your right arm swings forward as your left foot steps forward. Keeping your arms straight, exaggerate the arm movement slightly by swinging your arms higher as you walk. It is important to keep the arms straight as they swing from your shoulder.
2. Now pick up your poles, right "R" grip in right hand, start walking and dragging the poles behind you. Let your arms swing naturally with your arms moving in rhythm with your legs (opposite arm to leg).
3. The poles actually assist with maintaining proper posture, but you may find yourself leaning forward. Keep your spine erect, tummy tucked in, shoulders pulled slightly back and down but relaxed and eyes forward.
4. Once you feel comfortable with this, continue walking but start to lift the tip of the pole slightly as you swing your arm forward so you are no longer dragging the pole. If you lose your rhythm go back to dragging until you're comfortable.
5. Now you are ready to start working with poles and incorporating the "**3 P's**".  
**Plant:** as you swing your arm forward plant the pole at a 45 degree angle;  
**Push:** Now apply pressure to the base of the handle pushing down on the pole.  
**Propel:** From the pushing phase you are ready to propel yourself forward; it is the muscles in your upper body working.
6. An acronym that is easy to remember is **G.S.T.** and will help you remember a few important points.  
**G** – loose grip. Do not squeeze the grip tightly.  
**S** – straight arm. The swing should come from the shoulder.  
**T** – tips behind your feet. When walking the tips or booties should always stay back behind you.

Have fun! The most important aspect of Urban Poling is that you enjoy yourself while you exercise. Eventually the technique will fall into place and you will feel more confident and efficient.

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