



The WaterAid and RunningwithUs Walking Guide



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The Guide to Better Walking

Part One - Introduction

Dear Walker,

Welcome to the WaterAid running team and thank you for choosing to complete your walking challenge with us.

We are delighted to be working in partnership with the UK's leading coaching team to help you on your training journey in the months ahead. You may have seen Nick, Tom and Phoebe from RunningwithUs writing and coaching in Men's & Women's Running magazines or come across their work with brands such as Saucony, High5 and Just Giving or at events such as the Brighton Marathon. They have over 25 years of coaching experience between them and have helped thousands of beginners and top athletes to train for walking challenges, running events and triathlons.

Nick & Phoebe have coached and have worked with some of the best known Olympians in the UK and we are very excited to have them in our team at WaterAid to support our fundraisers.

We have comprehensive training schedules available for beginner, improver and experienced walkers at all distances which Nick, Tom & Phoebe have supplied. Once you are registered with us we will make sure you are able to choose the right plan for your level.

They are easy to follow and are perfectly complimented by our WaterAid Walking Guide also compiled by the RunningwithUs guys.

There will also be regular newsletters throughout the year from Nick, Tom & Phoebe focusing on topical top tips and answering some of your key questions about training, nutrition, injury prevention and most importantly, how to make this all fun!

If you have an important training question we want to help you and find the answer quickly so Nick, Tom & Phoebe have an emergency email hotline with us and we will pass any running questions onto them: please email questions to info@runningwithus.com. They will advise on what to do if you are ill, injured or struggling with the training we have sent, although you will find many of the answers also contained within this running guide.

We wish you the best of luck and look forward to working with you.



Ten top tips for getting started

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Tip one - Patience

Allow the time you need to improve slowly. Your body takes 3-4 weeks to absorb and adapt to the training you are undergoing – be organised and give yourself the time you need.

Tip two - Have a routine

Your body likes to work hard. Give it a routine and it will adapt and start to become fitter. Get used to training regularly and being organised with sleep, food, fitting in the training, stretching and exercises. Plan each day and fit in your training.

“Here are our
top ten tips for
getting started”

Tip five - Train to time not miles

It is hard to measure miles & kilometres. You can also find yourself clocking up miles rather than training sensibly. Give every walk a purpose! Train to time and follow the plan. Some sessions are easy to allow you to recover or build endurance. Some are harder building a stronger heart and more strength.

Tip three - Set small & achievable targets

Your training plan may contain many weeks of training. Set some targets that are realistic within this journey to race day. These targets will motivate you and help you check your progress. Maybe it could be a PB for a 5k or your fastest time around your local walking route.

Tip four - Have a plan & training schedule

Choose one of our training plans and try to follow the schedule. There will be days you can't follow due to work or tiredness. This doesn't matter, but use the plan as a guide for what to aim for each week.

Ten top tips for getting started

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Tip six - Listen to your body

Your body is an amazing piece of kit. It tells you how it feels and what it needs. Listen to it and watch the signs. If you are sore you might be about to get injured, so rest, stretch more, have a massage or cross train instead of walking. If you are tired you might need more rest and sleep. Eat well as the body wants to recover and replace its energy. So follow the training plan but always listen to your body.

“Here are our
top ten tips for
getting started”

Tip ten - Keep it social and have fun

This is the most important part to achieving your goal! Make it fun and share the journey with other people by walking with friends or a local group. Walking makes you feel good and gives you energy for everything else in your life. This is a healthy choice, and we want you to walk and have fun for many years!

Tip seven - Don't just walk

Try to use other forms of exercise to keep you strong and compliment your walking sessions. You need to be strong so consider including circuit training, swimming or biking in the weekly plan. Have a look at the exercises we have shown which can be completed using your own body weight at home or in the park. A strong runner is less likely to tire and pick up injuries.

Tip eight - Treat rest and nutrition seriously

Most of us concern ourselves with daily and weekly training but don't focus as much on sleep and nutrition. The body needs to recover from any training completed to become fitter and stronger. Aim for up to 8-9 hours sleep a night and eat lots of healthy carbohydrate, correct levels of protein and plenty of fruit & vegetables. They are always snacking and eating between meals to keep their blood sugar levels balanced and energy high. Treat rest and nutrition seriously while training well and you will improve.

Tip nine - Surround yourself with positive people

Training regularly can be tough and runners find it easier if they train together. You can share your journey and help to keep each other motivated.. Surround yourself with people who believe in you and who are interested in your journey and training. Positive people make you feel good and help you to train well.

The Guide to Better Walking

Part Two - The Right Kit



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The essentials:

- **Well fitting waterproof boots**, molded tread, for good grip both up and down slopes. Look to get these professionally fitted – it is worth the money. It is usual to get at least half size more than your shoe size. If you can feel the end of your toes touching the toe-end of a boot, it is too small. Good sideways ankle support is recommended for walking on uneven ground. Trainers are not recommended in rough country because they give limited support and little protection rocks and wet conditions.
- **Walking socks**, padded and breathable socks made with wicking fabrics will both help provide additional cushioning but also help prevent blisters. Look for socks that come over the height of your boots.
- **Lightweight waterproof trousers**, Lightweight, waterproof and breathable walking trousers or over trousers are inexpensive and can make a massive difference to keeping you warm and dry. Avoid denim or thick cotton that gets heavy in wet conditions and hot in the summers.
- **Layers**, Look to several layers of wicking, technical fabrics which will keep you warm but give you the option of removing if it gets warm. A thermal base layer is an essential requirement in the winter.
- **Goretex or other waterproof lightweight jacket** – breathable, water-resistant jacket, with hood, that lets sweat out and stops rain getting in is essential. Look for a fully waterproof, not just shower proof jacket. The jacket should be large enough to wear over a fleece. Velcro fastening on sleeves is recommended while pockets should be free from rain intrusion.
- **Accessories**, Hat's, gloves and scarves play a massive role in keeping you warm and comfortable. It is possible to get waterproof hats and gloves so consider these for the winter months.
- **Rucksack**, A small, lightweight 'day sack' should suffice for the training contained within our plans. Make sure it is fully adjustable with chest and waist straps and will be big enough to hold maps, food and additional clothing.

Never forget:

- **Phone**, a fully charged mobile phone should be considered and essential piece of kit. Consider keeping one separate to your normal every day phone so you know you can keep it fully charged for emergencies
- **Suncream**, 2, 3 or hours out in even light sun will increase your risk of skin damage. Always wear sun cream on all exposed skin. A brimmed hat can also help in bright sunlight.
- **A first aid kit**, a small, basic first aid kit should always be carried when you are venturing out of built up areas.
- **Map and compass**, for longer walks an OS map and compass should be considered essential.
- **Whistle, torch, safety blanket and emergency food & water**, whilst they may never be needed on the plans we set these items should be considered essential. Food & water should be additional to the food you intend on eating on your long walks.

The extras:

- **GPS**, a navigation device is not essential but can help with navigation and route planning, it should never replace a map however. A GPS can also be useful for monitoring your training.
- **Camera**, It's always nice to feel you have some record of your training journey!
- **Sunglasses**, some would consider these an essential item either way they will help you relax and enjoy the sunlight more.
- **Poles**, walking sticks or poles can be great over hilly or rocky terrain. They are not essential however unless you feel you need them for supporting your joints or have been advised to use them by a doctor or physiotherapist.

Top tips for keeping safe:

- Plan before setting out!
- Check the weather forecast and local conditions
- Remember what time it gets dark in the Autumn and Winter months
- Learn first aid
- Many accidents occur towards the latter part of the day stay focused and fresh!
- Charge your phone!
- Wear suitable boots with a treaded sole which provide support for ankles
- Wear bright clothing that is warm, windproof and waterproof
- Take spare warm clothing and perhaps a hat and gloves; it is always colder on the tops
- Bring additional food and water beyond what you'll need on the walk
- Bring a map, compass (and the ability to use them)
- In all conditions, it is wise to carry a whistle, torch, spare batteries.
- If in groups, make sure party leaders are experienced; do not let the party become separated
- Take special care of the youngest and weakest in dangerous places
- If you prefer to go alone, be aware of the additional risk. Let people know your route before you start.
- Be prepared to turn back if conditions are against you.
- If you have a serious problem, Dial 999 and ask for mountain rescue if in the hills as soon as possible. Prior to dialing 999 be prepared to state your contact number, your location if known, the nature and number of injuries if any.
- Keep injured/exhausted people safe and warm until help reaches you. If you cannot contact anyone, use six whistle blasts or torch flashes, repeated at minute intervals, to signal an emergency.
- Be particularly aware of precipices or cliffs, black ice or visible ice, gorges and stream beds
- Snow cornices on ridges or gully tops
- Exceeding your experience and abilities



The Guide to Better Running

Part Three – How the training should feel



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How should each walk feel?

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There are a number of different paces that you should aim to master that will make up your training:

Easy walk – fully conversational, relaxed and in control. 5/10

Steady walk – let the pulse come up a bit, still in control but breathing and putting effort into your walk. 6-7/10

Brisk walk – faster, more power strides, push the effort up, get the heart beating 7-8/10

Interval efforts – power walking at a high intensity, maintain a good tall posture and driving the arms 8-9/10

In detail:

The feeling of not being sure how fast you should train is common.

At the beginning all you are trying to do is get out and exercise. Find a consistency and a frequency of your training first. That should be at **easy pace** or if you can't talk comfortably as you are walking, you're going to fast, simple as that.

Faster than easy, conversational effort is **steady walking**. This is the backbone of training for more experienced walkers. This is where you must be honest, so conversation should still be possible, but a little strained.

Incorporating **brisk walking** efforts will see you getting into shape more quickly and efficiently. This is where you are walking at a controlled discomfort level: you can still talk between breaths, but only 5 or 6 word phrases.

Interval training and shorter, faster blocks of power walking, using over hilly terrain to get your heart pumping hard.

Rest

To help your body cope with the workload, rest is going to be as important a part of your training schedule as the walking. Listen to your body and take heed of any warning signs. If you feel fatigued even before you've left the front door, find yourself thinking up excuses not to train or start suffering a series of minor injuries; you probably need more time off. Taking enough rest allows physical and mental recovery and gives your body the time to adapt to your workload. Remember: on rest days, that is exactly what you should be doing!

Long Walks

Long walks are vital in your plan and key to being confident of tackling your planned event distance. At first, concentrate on increasing the time on your feet rather than worrying about distance. Start off by heading out for at least an hour and walk at a fully conversational pace. Gradually this will build to to include some steady and brisk walking as you get stronger. These effort improve your muscular endurance and condition your body to the mileage you'll tackle on event day. Use these session to practice with fuelling your walks and bedding in new kit.

Hills

Hill running develops strength in your muscles and tendons without putting them under the type of stress they are exposed to during faster training such as running. Walk up a 5-15% gradient with a strong, powerful stride as a 'power walk'. Turn immediately at the top and walk down the hill at and easy effort.

Fartlek

This is a Swedish term that literally means "speed play". It involves a number of bursts of effort over a variety of distances with a variable recovery. Originally the length of effort was based on the terrain, for example, pushing harder every time you came to a climb, no matter how long it was. But you can adapt it for your needs. Try to include a mix of faster paces and aim to do between 5 and 15 faster efforts during your walk using hills, lampposts, trees or other landmarks to targets for your harder efforts. These can be great fun when walking with others.

Cross Training & Core Conditioning

It is important that your training is balanced with some non-impact activities such as swimming, cycling, rowing, aerobics, etc, otherwise you are more likely to pick up an annoying injury that will set back your training. But more experienced walkers should also add cross training to their regime. You should aim to work a variety of muscle groups and not just your legs. Remember, though, that you are a walker, so just be careful not to make the cross-training, whether it is core conditioning, lifting weights, using an elliptical trainer or practicing Pilates, so intense that you are left too tired for your specific training.

A group of people are sitting on a grassy lawn in a park, stretching their legs. In the foreground, a woman with curly hair tied in a bun is sitting cross-legged, holding her knees. She is wearing a purple tank top and green sneakers. In the background, other people are also stretching, and a white building is visible through the trees.

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Part Five - Stretching

Stretching - a guide

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One - Glutes (Maximus & Minimus)

Sit with one leg out straight. Cross the other leg over, keeping knee bent. To feel stretch in backside hug bent knee into chest. Keep back straight.



Two - Hamstring (Origin point in buttocks and glutes)

Lay on back. Pull one leg up to chest and hug with both arms. Keep one leg straight on floor keeping ankle flexed.



Three - Hamstring (Belly or middle of)

Lay on back. Keep one leg on the ground. Raise other leg holding the back of the calf. Bring up to feel the stretch in the middle (or belly) of the hamstring. Use a rope or towel around the foot to help if you need to.



Four - Hamstring (insertion point - i.e., behind knee)

Repeat stretch number three but this time with a straight leg. Flex ankle to feel stretch in behind the knee. Use a rope or towel around the foot to help if you need to

Five - Lower back / IT band

Lay on back. Bring one leg up to chest and rotate to lower knee to floor using opposite arm as a weight. Keep one leg straight on floor keeping ankle flexed and keep shoulders on floor. Other arm should be straight out at shoulder level.



Stretching - a guide

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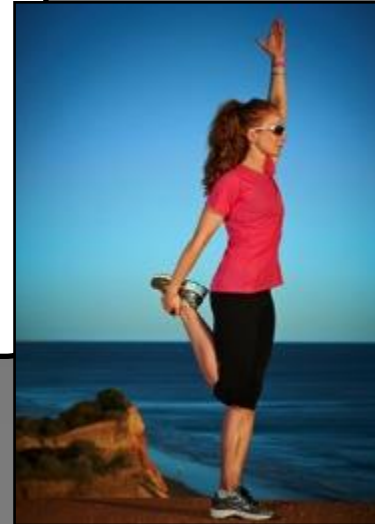
Six - Groin stretch (adductors)

Keep the back straight, take the foot to one side and take the knee over but not further than your foot, transferring weight to the bent leg. Feel the stretch on the inner thigh of the straight leg.



Seven - Quads

This can be done lying on your side in a straight line. Grasp the top of the ankle with the same side hand and bring heel to backside. Hips should be pushed forward. If you do this stretch standing and lose your balance, you have weak core stability.



Ten - Calf stretch (Soleus)

Repeat position as for number nine. But this time bend back leg to take stretch into lower calf above Achilles.



Nine - Calf stretch (Gastrocnemius)

Stand with feet shoulders width apart. Take one foot forward and keep feet parallel. Maintain the arch in the forward foot by pressing down with the toes to stop foot rolling in. Straighten back leg and feel stretch in top area of the calf.



Eight - Hip flexors

Kneel on one knee. Take the other leg forward with a large stride. Push hips downwards until a stretch is felt in the front of the hips/quads.



Remember

- Don't forget to stretch both legs and repeat holding stretch for 40-45 seconds each time
- Never stretch cold muscles. The main benefit for walkers is stretching after training.
- A good stretching routine will help to restore the muscle balance and allow you to be more flexible.
- Do not underestimate the value of cross training, massage and stretching in your schedule.



The Guide to Better Walking

Part Six - Strength and Conditioning

Strength and Conditioning - a guide

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The Finger Crusher

Get into a sit up position, find the natural arch in your back, place your hands under the arch, engage your lower abs and pelvic floor and push your spine down on to your hands, trying to crush your fingers.

The next level: Do slight alternate leg lifts, while still keeping the pressure on your hands even.



The Plank

Keep a straight line from the neck down through the legs to your ankles, engage all your core muscles by sucking your belly button up to the ceiling. Keep your chest over your elbows.

The next level: Hold this for 30 seconds to one minute and build it up gradually. If this is too hard to begin with, you can avoid lower back pain by doing this with your knees on the ground.



The Side Plank

Make a right angle with your supporting arm, your feet together and your stomach strong. Rise up, making sure you squeeze your glute and push your pelvis through. Hold it for 30 seconds.

The next level: Lift your free arm into the air, keep your side really strong, and don't let your middle sag.



The Bridge

From the sit up position, keep your stomach strong, engage your glutes and roll up into a bridge. Keep your hips high by squeezing your glute muscles.

The next level: Make this tougher by crossing your arms over your chest.



Strength and Conditioning - a guide

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Press-up

Press-ups are a key exercise to improve your arm swing when running. They work your pecs, triceps, abs and lower back. Every male runner should eventually be able to do 30 to 40. Place your hands shoulder and a half's width apart, get into the plank position, lower your chest to the floor and push back up, not just pushing through your chest and arms, but also through your core.



Split Leg Lunge

This works the running muscles in a full chain movement. Point your toes forward, keep your back heel lifted and with hands on hips, lunge down, squeezing the glute of your rear leg. Make sure everything goes down in the centre and not forwards. Your knee should NOT be over the front of your toes, lunge forward with a bent back knee.

The next level: Once you've nailed this move, you can progress to driving the knee up from the lunge.

One Legged Squat

This also works everything in a full chain movement. Stand on one leg, engage your glute on your standing leg, keep your hips facing forward and aligned with your knee and toe. You don't want your knee to roll inwards, so go down as far as you can without that happening.

The next level: You can use a Swiss ball between yourself and a wall for balance.



A man with short dark hair, seen from the back, is wearing a black t-shirt with the word 'COACH' in white capital letters. He is addressing a group of people outdoors. In the background, several people are visible, including a man in a white t-shirt and sunglasses, and a woman in an orange tank top. The setting appears to be a park or a similar outdoor area with trees and a white umbrella in the background.

The Guide to Better Walking

Part Seven - What To Do When Life Takes Over

What to do when life takes over...

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Something is always better than nothing

Keep 'ticking over' with easy paced, relaxed walking of 30-40 minutes. Once life returns to a level of normality so too can the more structured training.

Consider having an easy phase by working on endurance.

Re-focus by just walking to, well, enjoy walked. No pressure, the same mileage or maybe less but simply completed as easy paced, enjoyable walks.

Get organised!

Aim to predict your week and then place your walking training within it. Remember walking is easier to accommodate and fit into commuting than running or cycling.

Grab opportunities

Be spontaneous and always have your boots to hand!

The Key elements

Identify the key elements of your training and make them the priority.

Maximise your weekends

Use weekends for long walks and big quality sessions.

Less travel more speed

Be creative and set your own sessions if you can't get to your local walking group.

Be flexible and listen to your body

Be prepared to adapt.

However much we love our walking, prioritise our walks, make sacrifices in order to complete our training, there are or will be times when quite frankly life will be bigger. Full stop. Accept it. Be it the responsibility of being 'mum or dad' during school holidays, moving house, beginning a new job, dealing with family commitments and social engagements or quite simply being exhausted and stressed by the sheer pressure of life. There are times when getting out for a walk will feel like the last thing you want to do but the first thing you think you should do therefore leaving you in an anxious state of guilt ridden sweat (I've clearly been there myself!).

If walking is to become a regular part of your lifestyle for the foreseeable future, these periods in time are inevitable so let's stop fighting them and begin tackling the issue head on in order to make these difficult weeks bearable, guilt free and equate to some training value.

It is important to remember the first lesson of training – develop acceptance, resilience and intelligence. Review what's going in life and rationalise the situation. We coach some incredibly intelligent people and yet when it comes to runners, walkers and triathletes, however intelligent, there appears to be a lack of common sense! Step back and ask yourself whether this really is a period in life when you simply can't fit in or complete as much training as your plan suggests you should. If the answer is yes then back off and accept it and work out what you realistically can fit in by using some of the tips in this training guide on how to maximise your time. There is nothing wrong with doing a little less for a while if it is essential to work, family and life harmony. If the answer is 'I probably need to man up slightly and I could get out of bed even earlier than I already do to fit a run in' then get resilient and set that alarm clock please!

A cyclist wearing a red and white helmet and a black jacket is riding a road bike on a wet, paved road. The road curves through a hilly landscape with green grass and some trees in the background. The sky is overcast and grey.

The Guide to Better Walking

Part Eight - Cross Training

What is cross-training?

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▸ There are 2 types of cross-training or X training we all need to know about.

▸ One is your conditioning work, which focuses on strengthening muscles. This is your Pilates, core conditioning, weights and floor work such as the plank or press-ups (see the page on strength and conditioning for more). All very important and we need to be strong with a great posture to walk and train well.

▸ The other is aerobic conditioning such as jogging, swimming, cycling, aqua jogging (yes running in the pool with a buoyancy aid!), rowing and other clever machines. This exercises the heart and muscles and will definitely keep you aerobically fit.

▸ Your heart doesn't know the difference between going for a walk or X training it just works as hard as you ask it to. You can really boost your fitness towards any walking distance with clever X training.

In detail:

As we have already mentioned, we are always talking about training, writing about training and setting plans. So, like many coaches and writers, I suspect we have become guilty of just assuming you all know exactly what we mean when we say the magic words tempo, fartlek, progression run or cross (X) training. On our Charity Training Days the area of X training is always popular and there are lots of good questions.

The truth is there so much jargon out there and so many ways for you all to train. We have already described X training in the glossary and provided examples of the exercises you should be doing.

Now we are going to look at what X training really is and why it could be so important. Many of you will be doing it already as lovers of the gym and classes and for some of you we hope this article explains why you should be including it now in your weekly mix. In future newsletters from the charity we will include specific X training sessions and top tips.

We used to all have manual jobs and our strength came from our work, home life and generally being busy. As kids we were allowed to play more and even PE lessons were tough. So why is this X training relevant? Well to be honest we are now more fragile than ever before and break quite easily.

The heart doesn't know the difference between going for a run, walk or X training and swimming, it just works as hard as you ask. The muscles do though as running and walking are totally weight bearing and the hardest form of exercise, yet most natural also. So the clever athlete will walk as much as they know their body will allow but X train also in the week to boost fitness without the risk of injury.

We always recommend the new runner or walker to X train 1-2 times a week combined with the walks in our plans if possible. This way we can strengthen the muscles and improve posture before increasing the walking volume. We also tell walkers who are sore to X train instead of following their normal plan therefore reducing the risk of injury and allowing muscles to recover actively.

Cross-training tips

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Cross training adds variety and intensity to your walking plan without the impact of additional walking or jogging. Work to time and effort, not speed and distance and consider adding blocks of 'threshold' effort at a 3-4 word answer intensity.

Recreate your walking plan on the bike, cross-trainer, rower or in the pool swimming or Aqua Jogging if you feel sore in the lower limbs for need a change.

Cardiovascular cross training options include; biking, spin, swimming, aqua jogging, elliptical machines, rower.

Try our core conditioning exercises earlier in this pack once or twice a week for 10-15 minutes holding and repeating each position several times. These can all be completed at home after an easy run and you don't need to belong to a gym or spend hours there!

If you're injured the first thing to do is consult a doctor or a physiotherapist. If they say you are able, please still follow your training plan but use X training kit or the pool instead. Don't lose that hard-earned fitness and let's keep going. If you can see a physio. or sports injury expert they will also offer treatment and advice. Make sure though that the X training is also pain free.

