



Walking in a Winter Wonderland - At Any Age!

Top tips for people supporting older adults to be active in winter

What makes
walking in
winter so
great?



- Helps people socialise and meet others in a relaxed way
- Fresh air, seeing nature, and being active can help people combat the winter blues!
- Walking can be more comfortable in the cooler weather
- Fewer leaves on the trees mean a better view of the fantastic County Durham wildlife and scenery
- Shorter days make it easier to enjoy sunrises and sunsets
- Walking can be easier as paths are less overgrown
- Helps people get to know their local area

Walking in winter helps people Live Longer Better!



- Walking can give a sense of belonging in the community
- Walking and talking with others challenges the brain and reduces the risk of dementia
- Walking outdoors can help to improve stamina, strength, and balance. This can help reduce the risk of falls.
- Walking for 30 minutes or more a day is great for heart health

What's Live Longer Better about?

Live
Longer
Better.

It's a movement that focuses on building your fitness at any age! And thinking positively about getting older.

Live Longer Better focuses on...

Fitness - loss of fitness is not inevitable. Loss of fitness can be reversed at any age.

Negative thinking - is often linked to ageism in society. But positive thinking can change this.

Do you support older adults to be active?

Sign up for free training to help you challenge your understanding of older age.

Contact County Durham Sport for more details...
hello@countydurhamsport.com

FREE
TRAINING



"So, it's a social thing. You see these two girls here [walk leaders] saved my life, Miles. I don't know what I would have done. Because as you get older your friends dwindle."
Olivia.

Walk leaders are brilliant!

Top tips from the amazing walk leaders in East Durham!

Contrary to popular belief, older adults want to walk in all weather and on different terrains. Walk leaders play a key role in helping this happen!

How walk leaders help people stay active in winter:

- Pick a route suitable for the weather conditions
- Adjust the pace and route to suit walkers' needs and abilities
- Give people the confidence to take part in a walk they would not have done alone
- Encourage people to notice their surroundings and get to know their local area
- Develop a friendly and relaxed atmosphere in the walking group

Top Tips for Walk Leaders

These five top tips build on the great work that walk leaders are already doing to help older adults stay active in winter...



Assess the weather and adapt

There is plenty of good walking weather in winter! Don't shy away from certain routes and areas just because it is winter. Keep an eye on weather forecasts and assess the weather on the day. Change plans and take appropriate safety measures, if needed.



Have a set of walking poles that people can borrow

Walking poles help people walk safely in winter and on various terrains. Providing these for free helps those who can't afford them take part.

"I've always brought it [walking pole] to the Dene, yes... I don't think I would attempt it without, because it does help you... Well, just gives you more confidence." **Venessa.**



Teach people how to navigate

Being unable to navigate can be a safety concern and prevent older adults from getting active. Teaching people how to walk without a walk leader can help people stay active independently.

Point out any signage, landmarks, or way markers that could help people feel more confident finding their way. Let walkers know which routes are good to do in different weather.



Give a warm welcome

Have more walk leaders, or even a “buddy” so that when new people join the group they feel welcome and have someone to walk with

“I mean, I was going on a couple of walks. But you weren't in the cliques, so they didn't talk to you... Well, they would have a group and the group would stick together, and then I would just walk behind them.” **Henry.**



Don't just walk for walking's sake

Changing how walking is advertised can mean more people want to walk. Advertise walks that show people what is in their local area or as an opportunity to learn about local history.

“There used to be a bottle works here, on top of the cliffs, in Victorian times and they used to shove all the rubbish over the edge of the cliff. And it's got crushed about by the storms and the sea and it turns into little coloured pebbles. People come from all over the world to collect it, it put Seaham on the map.” **Anne.**

Additional Information



Direct people to the County Durham Sport website for information about becoming an Active friend and encouraging others to be active.

<https://countydurhamsport.com/active-friends-becoming-an-active-friend/>



Do you know someone who would like to walk but struggles to leave their home? Check out Move Mates. They pair people with friendly volunteers to meet for a regular walk!

<https://movemates.org.uk/>

The logo for We Are Undeatable, featuring the text "WE ARE UNDEFEATABLE" in white on a blue background.

WE ARE
UNDEFEATABLE

Direct people to the We Are Undeatable website to learn more about being active with long-term health conditions.

<https://weareundeatable.co.uk/getting-started>



Direct people to Walk Durham to see the wide range of local walks and groups. There is something for all abilities, including some very relaxed walks.

<https://www.durham.gov.uk/walkdurham>



This booklet is based on research undertaken in East Durham for a Masters by Research qualification at Durham University. The lead researcher was Miles Lawson. The project was supervised by Prof. Cassandra Phoenix (Durham University, Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences) and funded by County Durham Sport.