

Information for walkers

Walking outside is a fantastic activity, well proven to be beneficial for both physical and mental health. Walking in a group can be great fun as walkers are generally friendly people and we all have walking and a love of the outdoors in common. Walking with a group is not like walking on your own and keeping up with the group may be more testing than you expect. Or, if you are quite fit and used to walking you may find that the walk is too slow for your taste. You can take this into account when choosing your next walk.

Walk gradings

These are a general guide only. If you are unsure of your fitness level, try a shorter walk first. It's much better to find a walk a little too easy than be exhausted and unhappy. You can also phone (at a sociable time of day please) individual walk leaders for more detailed information about the walks. Telephone numbers are on the programme and the website.

Leisurely Walks - for reasonably fit people with at least a little country walking experience. May include unsurfaced rural paths. Walking boots and warm, waterproof clothing are recommended.

Moderate Walks - for people with country walking experience and a good level of fitness. May include some steep paths and open country and may be at a brisk pace. Walking boots and warm, waterproof clothing are essential.

Strenuous Walks - for experienced country walkers with an above average fitness level. May include hills and rough country and may be at a brisk pace. Walking boots and warm, waterproof clothing are essential. People in doubt about their fitness should contact the organiser or leader in advance.

What to bring

Essential

Water or other drinks - In hot weather bring at least a litre of fluid, preferably more.

Food and snacks - Most walks require a packed lunch unless otherwise specified on the programme. Always bring an extra snack "just in case".

Suitable footwear - On all our walks, we may walk over rough uneven ground, through streams, woods, hills, farmland and fields, and often copious mud in winter. Comfortable and supportive boots are recommended.

Suitable clothing - Depending on the time of year and weather conditions, warm and waterproof clothing is essential. Layers are best. We do not recommend walking in jeans - if they get wet, they are slow to dry and do not protect you from the cold.

Personal medication

An "ICE" (In Case of Emergency) card - or a written note specifying any medical conditions, essential medication and who to contact.

Recommended

Mobile phone

Spare jumper, gloves, hat, scarf, socks.

Waterproof trousers

First aid kit, suncream, sunhat, insect repellent, blister plasters, tic remover, antiseptic hand gel,

plasters, and simple painkillers.

Sit mat or spare plastic bag to sit on.

Optional

Map and/or GPS device
Walking poles
Gaiters (especially in winter mud and streams)

Leaders may refuse to accept participants who are inadequately equipped or who are unfit. If you forget to bring something (socks for example) don't despair as often someone in the group will have some spare.

About our walks

We encourage car sharing when this is feasible. It may be best to contact the walk leader beforehand and see what can be arranged or subscribe to our WhatsApp group and make it known that you can either offer or require one. Our car sharing policy is informal but it is expected that passengers will share the cost of petrol and car parking. It is up to the driver to monitor the distance and say how much they expect to receive. Generally, walkers don't wear their walking boots in the car as they may be very wet and muddy on the return journey so, please have spare shoes/sandals to travel in.

The start time for walks is prompt. If you are late then the group will probably have left. If you know you are going to be late, if possible, you should contact the leader or someone else on the walk and explain why you are late and what time you should arrive, and it is then at the leader's discretion whether to wait for you or not, or to make other arrangements such as someone else who knows the route to wait a short while for you.

Moderate and strenuous walks average a 2-miles an hour pace including stops. We stop for a 10-15 minute "coffee" break, and a 20 to 30-minute lunch break. On longer walks we may have a short break in the afternoon as well. There are plenty of opportunities to have a quick drink along the way, especially in hot weather. We don't routinely stop at pubs for lunch. If there is a pub option, it will be specified on the programme. Sometimes there is the opportunity to visit a pub or café at the end of the walk, but this is entirely optional.

Walks leaders are experienced walkers who volunteer to lead walks. They have walked the route before so they have knowledge of the terrain and any areas of potential difficulty. Walk leaders are happy to be contacted in advance to give more detailed information about their walk and phone numbers can be found on the walk description.

At the start of a walk the Walk Leader welcomes everybody, (especially any new walkers or visitors), gives a short overview of the walk, appoints a backmarker, counts the number of walkers and answers any questions. If you have any problems or medical conditions that you think the leader should be aware of, please have a quiet word with the leader prior to the start of the walk.

Walking Etiquette

The leader has a duty of care towards all the walkers, and is responsible for setting the pace to suit the fitness and capabilities of the group and the advertised grade of the walk. Please try to remain behind the leader, and avoid walking on ahead unless invited to do so – e.g., when going up hills. In which case please make sure you know where to wait for the leader and the rest of the group to catch up. If not specified, then you would wait at the top of the hill or at the next path junction to avoid going off course. The last person to reach the group will need a couple of minutes rest before carrying on even if most of the group have already been there a few minutes.

If walkers choose to walk far ahead of the walk leader uninvited, they will be considered to have left the group and no longer be part of the walk leader's responsibility.

If you need to leave the group at any time, for instance for a comfort break, then please tell someone, probably the backmarker, so that they can wait for you at an appropriate place to avoid you getting separated from the group.

Look back from time to time especially if the route changes direction, to make sure those following behind know which way to go. Wait if necessary. Call or shout ahead to advise the leader if the group becomes too stretched out.

If you become separated from the group and cannot raise the alarm or make telephone contact, our advice is to retrace your steps to the last known point and wait for 30 minutes. Someone from the group will retrace the route to find you. If you decide to leave a walk early for any reason, please let the leader or backmarker know.

Walking Poles

Walking poles are a brilliant walking accessory, but they can also be lethal weapons! Please be aware of, and keep control of your walking poles. When carrying them, please have the pointed ends forward and downward so you can see where they are and avoid accidentally poking the person in front or behind. When walking behind someone using poles it's best to leave a gap, particularly when going uphill, as a pole may accidentally slip backwards when the walker pushes hard on it to help propel themselves upwards.

Roads

Sometimes walks include road walking (usually a lane) without pavements. Each walker is responsible for his or her safety when crossing or walking along a road but the general rule is to keep to the right, unless the leader indicates otherwise; for example, on a sharp right-hand bend, it may be safer to cross to the left-hand side and then cross back after the bend. Please walk in single file and alert other walkers if you see/hear other road users such as cars/tractors/cyclists etc

Farmland

Some public footpaths cross crop fields. We try to be considerate and avoid damaging crops wherever possible, either by walking around the edge of fields, or in single file through the crop if that is where the footpath goes. Be guided by the walk leader.

Gates should be closed, unless told otherwise.

Dogs

Generally, dogs are welcome on our walks unless otherwise specified in the walk description. Dogs are the responsibility of the owner, and must be kept under control at all times. Please avoid extending leads as these can get tangled around other walkers and/or be a trip hazard. Many walks cross farmland or open moorland where animals graze. Many walks involve stiles not all of which are dog friendly. It is the owner's responsibility for lifting their dog over stiles, although quite often other walkers will help.

Insurance

Being a member of Ramblers gives Public Liability Insurance only. This provides cover for third party incidents, such as accidentally leaving a gate open and animals escape, or possibly injury caused to one member by the actions or negligence of another member, but there is an onus to prove those actions or negligence. Rambler insurance does not give personal accident or illness cover.

Please see the Ramblers website for more information about Public Liability Insurance. Non-members are covered for up to 3 walks only, which is why we encourage new people to join after three walks.

Walk Cancellations

Walks are rarely cancelled. Cancellations are usually because either the walk leader can no longer lead the walk and no-one else can cover or the weather and/or ground conditions are considered dangerous. Cancellations are always publicised on the website. When the weather is very bad, please check the website before leaving home or phone the walk leader.

Countryside Code.

Leftover food, orange peel, banana skins etc. don't just spoil the beauty of the countryside; they can be dangerous to wildlife and farm animals. Please take your litter home with you and leave no trace of your visit.

If you are a bit unsure about any of this or feel a bit nervous joining your first walk, then please just contact the walk leader or one of the committee members. We can answer any questions, and/or arrange for someone to look out for you on your first walk. You'll meet lots of lovely people, have some great conversations, get fresh air and exercise, and explore some magnificent coast and countryside. Walking is wonderful 😊