



# Walk the Talk with Nordic Walking

by Sandro Roth & Andras Szucs

If gyms are not an option for you, running is too boring and walking is just not enough, there may be a new fitness solution for you – **Nordic Walking**.

## A New Fitness Option

Nordic Walking is now taking off in New Zealand and people of all levels of fitness are joining in on the phenomenon that has taken the world by storm. Nordic Walking (also referred to as Pole Walking) is popular for two reasons:

1. It is a simple activity that can be done just about anywhere, by anyone, at any time.
2. The benefits gained versus the time and effort put in is almost unbeatable.

Nordic walking uses specially designed poles to create a low stress total body work-out which delivers profoundly greater benefits than regular walking. It is a weight-bearing activity which gives amazing aerobic fitness, body conditioning and weight loss benefits, yet achieves all of this with less impact on the lower body.

## 10 Health Benefits

### Nordic Walking –

1. Activates 90 per cent of the body’s muscles.
2. Is 20-30 per cent more intensive than regular walking.
3. Burns up to 46 per cent more calories than regular walking.
4. Decreases weight load and impact on lower body joints.
5. Strengthens and tones upper back and shoulders.
6. Gives an intense work-out, with lower perceived exertion.
7. Increases the lateral mobility of the spine.
8. Promotes an upright and balanced walking posture.
9. Improves co-ordination.
10. Releases pain and muscle tension in the neck and shoulders.

Nordic Walking is a relatively young activity and was only ‘invented’ in 1997 in Finland by Marko Kantaneva and his team. Even though Nordic Walking originates from the cool Scandinavian countries, it is an activity that is perfectly suited to New Zealand’s climate, landscape and ‘outdoorsy’ lifestyle. Snow and skis are definitely not needed!

**Nordic Walking can be done anywhere that normal walking is performed – on sand, gravel paths, asphalt or grass, and on flat or undulating land.**

Nordic Walking involves a simple and rhythmic, yet definite technique that is easy to learn. It is not like hiking or tramping, so proper instruction is essential in order to ensure that the movement is correct and can deliver the promised benefits. Learning to walk with poles correctly is like learning to ride a bike – it takes a bit of time to get the hang of the technique, but once learned it is learned for life.



**If you can walk, you can Nordic Walk, and the beauty of it is that you choose the intensity!**

You may wonder why poles and the correct technique make such a difference as it is basically only an enhancement to walking. A Nordic Walking class is not just walking as such.

After you have learned the proper technique with tuition from highly qualified instructors, you will discover that it can be very similar to a work-out routine in the gym! You do warm-up exercises/games, technique progressions, the actual Nordic Walk part, strength exercises and stretching.

People love the fact that they can have a great work-out that is recreational in nature and also social. It doesn't matter if they have varying levels of fitness because the intensity of a Nordic walking session is determined by the use of the upper body more so than by the tempo of the walk. So each person can exercise at the intensity that is suitable for them. For serious fitness buffs there are variations of Nordic walking (e.g. Nordic jogging, uphill striding, double pole actions) that create high intensity training sessions – these are definitely not for the faint-hearted!



Nordic Walking is a new revolution in fitness that many people in Europe, the United Kingdom and the United States are raving about. For decades, cross-country skiers have been doing similar forms to Nordic Walking as their off-season training. These athletes have been tested as having some of the highest endurance abilities of anyone.

Today's Nordic Walking has been adapted to suit most people, and that's one of the reasons why it is now one of the fastest growing activities worldwide.

**Whether it is just for fun or for health and fitness benefits, Nordic Walking has plenty to offer:**

- Group Nordic walking classes
- Nordic walking as an activity for Personal Trainers to offer clients
- Nordic walking for injury rehabilitation
- Nordic walking for weight loss

Nordic Academy New Zealand owners Sandro Roth (National Training Manager) and Andras Szucs, and their team of qualified instructors are on a mission to bring Nordic Walking to as many New Zealanders as possible. It is easy to get involved with this exciting new activity that has got the whole world talking. Simply contact Nordic Academy New Zealand via email: [sandro@nordicacademy.co.nz](mailto:sandro@nordicacademy.co.nz) or phone: (04) 389 3655 (9am – 5pm). For further information about Nordic Walking, visit the website: [www.nordicacademy.co.nz](http://www.nordicacademy.co.nz)

*NORDIC ACADEMY NZ – leading the way in Nordic Walking. Nordic Academy offers regular Nordic Walking fitness classes and excursions, information seminars, one off 'learn how to' clinics for beginners, and it boasts a Teaching Academy which offers accredited Instructor Courses nationally (15 CECs with REPs NZ or 30 CECs with NZ Board of Podiatry).*

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