

Code of Practice

Why is there a Code of Practice?

Exercise Anywhere has introduced a Code of Practice (COP) to encourage best practice by Nordic Walking UK instructors. This COP is promoted to consumers as a quality assurance / kite mark. To achieve all the benefits of Nordic walking it is necessary to be taught good technique, making the role of the instructor very important. The intention is for the public to have confidence in their instructor when participating in Nordic or fitness walking and to distinguish those instructors operating in a professional and safe manner. Ultimately, it demonstrates recognition to those who have invested in their personal development.

The COP is not exhaustive and it has taken into consideration the diverse range of instructors, whether they instruct for financial gain or as a voluntary activity. It is the instructor's responsibility to keep up-to-date with current legislation and health and safety issues appropriate to them. This COP is intended as a minimum benchmark to which instructors should operate. Although Exercise Anywhere has developed guidelines, and specific courses and modules to assist the instructor's development, the onus is on the instructor to have the correct qualifications and to maintain Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for delivering Nordic or fitness walking to their particular market.

The Code

Teaching Technique:

- Instructors will teach Nordic walking technique based on the Nordic Walking UK Gear System. Each stage of technique will be demonstrated using the precise anatomical movements necessary to allow students to progress and work towards the goal of full technique.
- Instructors will keep up-to-date on the latest Nordic Walking UK techniques and developments, and will implement these to the best of their ability.
- Instructors will ensure the **safety** of participants by delivering classes and walks in group sizes of no more than 20 participants to one instructor / leader.
- Instructors will ensure **quality delivery** and individual instruction by delivering Learn to Nordic Walk sessions in group sizes of no more than 15 participants to one instructor.
- Sessions will always incorporate appropriate warm up exercises and cool down stretches.

Use of Nordic walking & other equipment:

- Instructors will keep up-to-date on the development of Nordic walking equipment, in particular poles, and be able to give informed kit advice to participants. NWUK instructors will teach using poles that have been designed to provide specific strength and stiffness for the technique being taught or used; with hand-straps or handles designed to facilitate correct technique; and removable 'paws' for different terrains.
- If other fitness equipment is used within sessions (Gymstick bands, balls, weights, etc.), instructors will ensure they are used according to manufacturers' guidelines. The same process should be applied for any fixed items such as park benches and Trim Trails.
- Instructors will check the condition of poles or any other equipment prior to every session. All equipment will be risk assessed.
- Instructors will risk assess the use for exercise of any outdoor fixed items, such as park benches and Trim Trails, or natural occurring items, such as logs.

Safety of clients & the instructor:

- Instructors will ensure they hold adequate public liability and professional indemnity insurance and the relevant levels of qualifications for the environment / terrain in which they teach, and for the fitness / health levels of the participants.
- Instructors will prioritise the health and safety of themselves and their clients at all times by preparing sessions in advance, risk assessing routes and making contingency plans for incidents / emergencies.
- An instructor will cancel, or aim to safely end, an activity in the event of severe weather conditions which may present a risk of injury to participants.
- All instructors will hold a suitable and up-to-date first aid qualification that includes CPR. The instructor will always carry a first aid kit.
- Instructors will use PAR-Q forms to assess the readiness of participants to take part in the planned session and will ensure sessions are taught to the correct level for those taking part.
- When working with children or vulnerable adults, instructors will ensure they are aware of, and adhere to, relevant Government safeguarding guidelines.

Respect for the environment:

- Nordic Walking UK instructors are ambassadors for Nordic and fitness walking and have a role as guardians of the natural environment in which they walk. It is important that instructors respect the areas they operate in and project a professional image to other users and inhabitants.
- Instructors will follow the Country Code and ensure participants do the same.
- Instructors will be mindful of the environmental impact of leading groups in some areas of the countryside and seek to minimise the damage done to paths, wildlife and plants, etc.

Personal Practice:

- To the best of their ability, it is important that an instructor's own personal technique reflects the full anatomical movement as taught by NWUK. All instructors will regularly practice their own technique and seek feedback and refresher tuition from other instructors and national tutors.

Professional Development:

- Instructors will continually develop their knowledge and skills in relation to Nordic and fitness walking, by taking part in a range of CPD activities to maintain and improve the quality of service delivery.
- Instructors will attend a minimum of one Nordic Walking UK CPD event per year to remain current. Examples include training courses, national conferences, regional networking events, webinars.
- Instructors will maintain a continuous and up-to-date record of CPD activities.