



THE DESCRIPTION OF NORDIC WALKING STATEMENT BY INTERNATIONAL NORDIC WALKING ASSOCIATION INWA

Introduction

Already approved by many scientific researches, correct Nordic Walking technique significantly improves physical condition, health, and overall well-being. Although Nordic Walking is normally described as walking with poles, the technique is much more comprehensive and needs to be adhered to in order to realize the health benefits documented by this scientific documentation. It is critical that the principles and the characteristics of the Nordic Walking technique are clearly described and communicated worldwide.

INWA feels that communication of this message is critical as some organizations have introduced their own "techniques" which do not fulfil the original criteria of Nordic Walking and therefore should not be promoted and marketed as Nordic Walking.

In many countries the public sector and the government sanctioned institutions support the development and spreading of Nordic Walking. As such, Nordic Walking has to be promoted and instructed only by authorized organizations, their professionals and officially certified Nordic Walking instructors, who have received proper education of the correct Nordic Walking technique.

What is Nordic Walking?

Nordic Walking has its roots in the early 1930's in Finland as an off-season training method for competitive cross-country skiers. Development of Nordic Walking in its present form as a recreational physical activity started in early 1980's in Finland. In 1997 Nordic Walking was launched internationally as a result of successful co-operation between Finnish Central Association for Recreational Sports and Outdoor Activities "Suomen Latu", Finnish Sports Institute "Vierumäki" and Finnish pole manufacturer Exel plc.

The basics of Nordic Walking technique is correct biomechanical walking combined with some characteristics of arm and upper body movements of the classic Nordic Skiing (Cross country skiing) techniques. Nordic Walking is an enhancement of regular walking using specifically designed Nordic Walking poles to



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create a complete body workout. Intensity of the Nordic Walking training can be adjusted for different target groups for health, fitness and sport levels. The movements executed with the correct technique improve body awareness, control, posture, breathing and overall well-being. Nordic Walking can improve the quality of life.

In short: Invented in Finland, Nordic Walking is a natural, safe, effective and complete physical activity suitable for all. With specially designed Nordic Walking poles, Nordic Walking is a scientifically proven activity that combines technically correct walking with features of Nordic cross-country skiing's arm and shoulder movements.. Active and controlled trunk movements together with correct body alignment and core stability are also important parts of Nordic Walking.

Nordic Walking provides

- An enhancement of regular walking
- Natural and fluid movements engaging up to 90 % of the body muscles
- Harmonic and symmetric training for the whole body
- Effective aerobic conditioning due to activation of both large and small muscle groups that provide rhythmic and dynamic movements
- Increased blood circulation and metabolism
- Continuous alternation of activation and relaxation of the muscles involved, promoting relief in tight muscles
- Safe, healthy, bio-mechanically correct movements
- Correct body alignment and posture
- Learned skills that can be transferred to everyday life
- Physical exercise suitable for all, irrespective of age, sex or physical condition
- A non-competitive sport.

In short: Nordic Walking provides a natural, safe and effective way to improve one's cardiovascular stamina while simultaneously engaging up to 90% of the body muscles. Nordic Walking assists with other important health benefits. The learned skills can be transferred to everyday life and can be seen, for example, as better walking, better body control and posture.



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Conclusion

The goal is to effectively communicate on the principles and characteristics of Nordic Walking and to educate both people and public administrations on the importance of proper Nordic Walking technique. Several features of Nordic Walking can be flexible, such as the pole length, which can be adapted to personal needs. Other features include personal style and movement. Naturally, the more adept individuals become with perfecting the technique, the more benefits can be reached.

Principles of Nordic Walking are "sacred" as *natural, fluid and safe movements which can be transferred to everyday life*. Our Nordic Walking Instructors help people to move better in a fluid and natural way and to act with a better body control and body awareness also in their everyday life. At the same time they are teaching an excellent way to improve their physical condition.

This all is the great value of Nordic Walking for the Public Health!

More information on Nordic Walking technique can be obtained from INWA and INWA's member organizations.
www.inwa.nordicwalking.com

The International Nordic Walking Association INWA was established in Finland in 2000. INWA is the only international organization authorized by the creators of Nordic Walking to promote, develop and safeguard the principles and characteristics of Nordic Walking worldwide. In co-operation with professionals in sports, health and fitness, INWA develops innovative teaching methods and educational programs in Nordic Walking. INWA also collaborates with the scientific and medical communities offering research guidelines. At the end of 2006, INWA will have 17 official member organisations. INWA Nordic Walking Instructors have been certified in nearly 40 countries around the world. More information: www.inwa.nordicwalking.com



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