



GM Walking Festival 2022

Tips and advice for leading a GM Walking Festival walk 1st – 31st May 2022

We all benefit from moving more. Walking is the simplest way for most people to be more active as part of a daily routine, and for pleasure, active travel, and to look after the environment.

The GM Walking Festival 2022 offers a range of free, group walks in communities and neighbourhoods across Greater Manchester that appeal to those who walk regularly and, to those who don't often walk.

We anticipate there'll be around 300 walks to choose from, with each one being different because of the theme, the place, and of course the people that join in. The walks provide the opportunity for people to move more, connect with each other, and discover more about their local spaces.

We understand that not having a 'walk leader' may seem like a barrier to getting involved. This brief guide provides some tips on planning a walk, and advice for a walk leader taking the group on a walk. We hope it helps empower groups and individuals to have the confidence to organise a walk for the people you work with and use walking to change lives.

What training do I need?

You don't need any specific qualifications or training to take people on short group walks in places like parks, greenspaces and urban areas. However, we can help with some straightforward advice on good practice which can help you all have a fun and safe time.

We can also offer some additional support for those leading walks via our free **Walk Your Way** workshops. For more information on this, please visit the [website page](#) or contact info@gmmoving.co.uk

Walks involving challenging terrain like hills and moorland would need to be led by experienced, qualified, and insured walk leaders.

Good practice for walks

If you intend to plan a walk and take a group from the general adult population in your community, the following points provide a summary of the key elements to consider.

Walks for children and people with additional needs may need to be delivered within the context of additional safeguarding considerations and procedures.



If you're planning and taking a walk as part of your job, or in a voluntary capacity in an organisation, it is worth checking with the organisation if there are any existing organisational procedures to follow for running group activities.

Pre-walk planning

- **Think about where to walk**
 - How far should it be for the people taking part?
 - Should the route be linear or circular?
 - Are there quieter roads or greenspace you can include?
 - Any points of interest?
 - Are there options to change the route if required? E.g. Make it shorter, longer or avoid an obstacle?
 - Any facilities needed along the way, such as toilets, somewhere to sit, a café etc.?
- **Check out the route**
 - Walk the route beforehand with a group in mind. A group will take longer to walk the route than an individual or pair.
 - Make a note of anything that would make walking in a group more challenging than walking on your own or in pairs. Things to consider may include (but not limited to):
 - Are there roads to cross? Where is the safe crossing point? Would a group of 10 or more be able to cross at once?
 - Are paths wide or narrow, or over-grown? Will it be slippery if wet?
 - What are the pinch points that may spread the group out?
 - Any stiles or barriers that will make it difficult for some people to access?
 - Do you need to wait for group to come back together at any point?
 - Consider if anything on the route means the walk poses a hazard? Is there anything that people should be made aware of verbally as you approach it on the walk? E.g., over-hanging branches
- **Consider the conditions**
 - Terrain e.g., are there hills, inclines, cobbles or mud on the route, or is it near water etc.?
 - Weather e.g., it is wet, slippery, icy, windy, are there puddles etc.?
 - Footwear e.g. is it appropriate for the conditions?
- **Route planning tools**
 - Go Jauntly app
 - Komoot app
 - Love Exploring app
 - [GM Walking website](#) – routes, resources etc
 - Themed walks ideas to keep things interesting, like nature, history, photography etc.



Walking with your group

- **Before**
 - Have a well-charged mobile phone in the unlikely event of an emergency
 - Mingle with and chat to walkers on arrival to welcome them and put them at ease
 - Outline the route, length of walk, summary of terrain, points of interest etc.
 - Encourage/answer any questions
 - Do a head count – would your group size benefit from having an identified walker at the back of the group known as the 'back marker', to ensure no one is left behind?
 - Ensure any under-18s or vulnerable adults attend with someone to supervise them
- **During**
 - Set a pace which matches the ability level of the group
 - Keep an eye out for the whole group and adjust pace if needed
 - Keep people motivated and point out anything of interest
 - Pause and regroup when necessary
- **After**
 - Repeat headcount
 - Thank people and encourage them to come again
 - Encourage people to continue walking independently (self-led)

Do I need insurance?

You don't need to be insured to take others out on a short walk in the community. Walking is the most accessible and lowest-risk form of physical activity.

If there are any incidents, stay calm and assess what needs to be done. Call the emergency services if specialist help is required. It is likely that the group will respond collectively to support anyone who has a minor slip, trip or fall. For example, moving to the side to rest, keeping warm or help with wiping clean a small cut or graze.

Any questions, or further support needed?

[Read our FAQs](#), visit the [website page](#), or drop us an email at info@gmmoving.co.uk

Let's help each other to #KeepMovingThisMay!
#GMWalking

Strolling Wandering Roaming
Ambling Walking Striding
Shuffling Mooching Exploring
Stepping Pushing Trekking

#GMWalking