



Telephone: 01963 31842
Email: info@balsamcentre.org.uk



Balsam Centre Health Walks
Spring/Summer
April 2022 - Sept 2022

Why walk?

It's widely acknowledged that walking from A to B is better for the environment and air quality in our towns and villages than using our diesel and petrol powered cars.

Walking is undeniably good for us too. It may:

- improve your mood
- reduce **stress**
- manage **anxiety**
- help you sleep better
- increase your energy
- help you to cope with difficult times
- improve your confidence and self-esteem
- reduce the risk of **depression**

These points are explored in further detail on:

<https://www.bupa.co.uk/newsroom/ourviews/walking-health>

A *morning walk* specifically may have many potential benefits. “**Just one thing**” by Dr Michael Moseley first aired on BBC Radio 4 in March 2021. In the April 10th episode he explores why an **Early Morning Walk** is beneficial to our health, and on May 15th why **Green Spaces** could benefit your brain and body. The episodes are available on BBC Sounds App or <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p09by3yy/episodes/player?page=1>

And there's always NHS guidance:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/walking-for-health/>

Any cited sources of information are given in good faith and are a small representation of what is available. The Balsam Centre is not advocating a particular viewpoint and individual judgement should be used when accessing such information.

Have you considered using walking poles..?

There are several reasons to use walking poles when out walking or trekking. Walking poles help you move across terrain quicker, provide additional support and reduce the amount of effort required thus allowing you to achieve more during your walks.

When used correctly walking poles can significantly increase your pace which has additional health benefits. Walking poles improve posture, especially important if you are carrying a load. There is a tendency to slump forward whilst going uphill which shifts your centre of gravity and may increase the chances of slipping or stumbling on uneven terrain. The poles will help you keep your body position more upright so you can use your arms and shoulders to propel yourself up the trail more easily. For more tips about walking poles:

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/news/walk-magazine/reviews/2012/september/walking-poles-buyers-guide.aspx>

Interested in becoming a walk leader?

We welcome new walk leaders and back-markers. If the idea appeals, we provide free training. For details, telephone Jani 01963 31842 or email info@balsamcentre.org.uk

What is a Balsam Centre Health Walk?

Our Health Walks are a good way to increase your fitness levels, enjoy local natural spaces and meet new people. Trained Health Walk Leaders plan a variety of walks which are free of charge, though donations may be given at the end of the walk to support our work here at the Balsam Centre.

Which walk is right for me?

There are different types of Health Walks to accommodate a range of walking experiences and fitness levels.



“Short” Walk – from/to the Balsam Centre @ 10am, Tuesdays

These faster paced 1-hour walks aim to maintain or increase general fitness. This average walking pace is about 3mph, we therefore offer walkers the option after approximately half an hour to walk back with a leader at a slower pace. The walk follows pavements, paths and tracks around Wincanton and the surrounding fields and do include some inclines.



Long Walks - start location and day will vary each week

These walks are for those with a good level of fitness. The meeting point will be given when you book.

How do I join a Walk?

If you would like to participate in any of the Health Walks please drop into the Centre and complete a registration form before attending your first walk. We are not able to accept walkers without registration.

Once you have registered, you can join any walk in the brochure. **Booking is required for “Long” walks**, though not for “Short” walks. Walks of any length may be cancelled in exceptional circumstances or weather conditions and those who have booked to attend a long walk will be contacted. If in doubt, please contact the Centre.

We advise that you take part in walks appropriate for your health and fitness levels. If you have not participated in much exercise recently or are worried about your health, please consult your doctor before taking part or increasing your physical activity levels.

A waterproof coat, removable layers and supportive, waterproof footwear is recommended. Please bring a facemask, hand sanitiser and drinking water. You won't need to wear the mask on the walk if you can maintain social distancing.

A parent or guardian must supervise any children under the age of 16. If you wish to bring a young child, please phone and book your place as some walks may not be suitable for the very young.

Regrettably dogs are not allowed on the walks.

Covid guidelines:

Please do not attend a Health Walk or enter The Balsam Centre if you are feeling unwell or have been recently in contact with anyone who has tested positive for Covid 19. If you maintain social distancing, you don't need to wear a mask on the Health Walk, but we advise that you bring one, along with hand sanitiser for contact points. Walk Leaders will take your details for Track and Trace. Information will be destroyed after 3 weeks. New walkers need to fill in a Walkers Registration Form which outlines the Covid guidelines. Walks starting from The Balsam Centre will begin from the ramp outside the front door.

Last week of March



Long Walk – Monday 28th March – 10am

Sturminster Newton: *Walking on part of the railway, mostly level with a steady climb up into Piddles Wood but worth it.*
No Stiles, ground a little muddy in places
Leaders: Pamela & Lynda

Week 1



Tuesday 5th April

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – Thursday 7th April – 10am

Alfred's Tower: A walk through the woods, could be muddy and a couple of stiles. Approximately 5 miles.
Meeting point: Alfred's Tower car park, Kingsettle Hill.
What 3 words location: searching.mainly.ditching
Leaders: Lorraine & Hilary

Week 2



Tuesday 12th April

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – No walk planned

Please see email for any walks coming up for this week.

Week 3



Tuesday 19th April

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – Friday 22nd April – 10am

Wells/Wookey Hole: This is a 4.3 mile walk starting off in the City of Wells and then out over fields to Wookey Hole and back via a disused quarry. One steepish climb but otherwise moderate walking, no more than 5 stiles.
Meeting point: Outside Waitrose entrance (Whiting Way, Wells BA5 2PJ). There is car parking there and other car parks in the city (chargeable)
What 3 words location: parsnip.firebird.frock
Leaders: Tony & Annette

Week 4



Tuesday 26th April

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – No walk planned

Please see email for any walks coming up for this week.

Week 5



Tuesday 3rd May

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – No walk planned

Please see email for any walks coming up for this week.

Week 6



Tuesday 10th May

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – Thursday 12th May – 10am

Westhay Moor: This is a flat/level walk through the lakes and reed-beds of the Avalon Marshes. There are NO stiles, but a couple of gates to go through. On-route there is a bird-watching 'hide' with great artwork to view, and also - further on - is a living tree sculpture of 'The Bird Murmurations'. The walk is about 5 miles lasting approximately 2 hours.

Meeting point: BA6 9TX, but this is for a remote farmhouse, the actual Car Park is another 0.5 miles further on.

Leaders: Chris & Maureen

Week 7



Tuesday 17th May

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – Monday 16th May – 10am

Mere Down: A walk on the downs, steepish uphill and downhill, a couple of stiles. Approximately 5 miles

Meeting point: Castle Street carpark, Mere, BA12 6JE

What 3 words location: joined.printing.objective

Leaders: Lorraine & Hilary

Week 8



Tuesday 24th May

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – Thursday 26th May – 10am

Haytesbury Chalk Stream: A lovely walk alongside the River Wylye and across lush water-meadows. This is an easy, mostly level walk but has a few stiles. Approximately 4 miles.

Meeting point: Outside the Angel Inn, BA12 0ED

What 3 words location: expel.elevator.spurring

Leaders: Lu & Annette

Week 9



Tuesday 31st May

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – No walk planned

Please see email for any walks coming up for this week.

Week 10



Tuesday 7th June

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – Tuesday 7th June – 10am

Sherborne: Walk through part of the park and Osborne, approx 5 miles.

Meeting point: Sherborne Garden Centre overflow car park. DT9 3ND

What 3 words location: dialect.comb.cavalier

Leaders: Peter & Wendy

Week 11



Tuesday 14th June

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – Friday 17th June – 10am

Ditcheat: This will be a gentle 4 mile walk around the village of Ditcheat.

Meeting point: TBC

Leaders: Tony & Annette

Week 12



Tuesday 21st June

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – Monday 20th June – 10am

TBC

Leaders: Pamela & Lynda

Week 13



Tuesday 28th June

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – Friday 1st July – 10am

Ebbor Gorge: The 4.5 mile walk takes us down the gorge and heads towards Wookey Hole and then back up affording fine views of the Somerset countryside. No steep inclines, less than 5 stiles, moderate walking.

Meeting point: The Ebbor Gorge car park (free)

What 3 words location: stroke.rave.food

Leaders: Tony & Annette

Week 14



Tuesday 5th July

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – No walk planned

Please see email for any walks coming up for this week.

Week 15



Tuesday 12th July

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – Thursday 14th July – 10am

Glastonbury Tor: Yes, this is all UPHILL to get to the top, we can stop regularly for breaks on the way up, but the view is well worth it. The footpath is all concrete, so very firm underfoot. The walk is about 4.5 – 5 miles lasting about 2 hours.

Meeting point: the local Morrisons Supermarket, Street Road, Glastonbury BA6 9ED, where you get THREE hours of FREE parking.

Leaders: Chris & Maureen

Week 16



Tuesday 19th July

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – No walk planned

Please see email for any walks coming up for this week.

Week 17



Tuesday 26th July

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – Monday 25th July – 10am

Corton Denham: A walk through farmland to Beacon hill, with great views if the weather is good. Approximately 5 miles

Meeting point: Cadbury Castle car park, South Cadbury BA22 7HA

What 3 words location: excavated.vitals.oldest

Leaders: Lorraine & Hilary

Week 18



Tuesday 2nd August

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – Monday 1st August – 10am

TBC

Leaders: Pamela & Lynda

Week 19



Tuesday 9th August

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – Tuesday 9th August – 10am

Evershot: Walk through the park to Melbury Osmond and return. Approx 4 miles.

Meeting point: The triangle at the east end of Evershot parking. DT2 0JZ

What 3 words location: narrowest.worlds.unimpeded

Leaders: Peter & Wendy

Week 20



Tuesday 16th August

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – Monday 15th August – 10am

Win Green, Shaftesbury: A walk on the chalk downs to the dew pond at Tollard Royal, gentle downhill and uphill. Approximately 5 miles.

Meeting point: Win green near Shaftesbury, SP7 0ES

What 3 words location: cabinet.bravo.spellings

Leaders: Lorraine & Hilary

Week 21



Tuesday 23rd August

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – Thursday 25th August – 10am

East Knoyle and Wren's Birthplace: Wonderful views across the Blackmore Vale, walking on paths through woods and fields with a short stint on the road. Approximately 5 miles.

Meeting point: East Knoyle Village Hall SP3 6AE

Leaders: Annette & Lu

Week 22



Tuesday 30th August

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – Thursday 1st September – 10am

Sturminster Newton: This is a NEW walk for me, and as yet un-recc'd. It is a circular walk through woods and fields to Plumber Manor and then return by a different route. The walk is about 4.5 – 5 miles lasting about 2 hours.

Meeting point: The Old Mill, Newton Hill, Stur' DT10 9ED

Leaders: Chris

Week 23



Tuesday 6th September

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – No walk planned

Please see email for any walks coming up for this week.

Week 24



Tuesday 13th September

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – Friday 16th September – 10am

Ilminster: This is a 4 mile walk along an old railway line and medieval roadway between Ilminster and Donyatt. There is one short steep incline, otherwise easy walking.

Meeting point: TBC

Leaders: Tony & Annette

Week 25



Tuesday 20th September

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – Thursday 22nd September – 10am

Pitcombe: This will be a country walk from Pitcombe, through Wyke Champflower, past Wyke Cheese to Bruton. A mixture of country road, tracks and a couple of hills. A circular walk finishing back in Pitcombe. Approximately 2hrs.
Meeting point: TBC
Leaders: Maureen & Pamela

Week 26



Tuesday 27th September

Short Walk, 10am

From/to the Balsam Centre, BA9 9PA. Walks typically 2-3 miles, 40-60 minutes.



Long Walk – No walk planned

Please see email for any walks coming up for this week.

The list of walks can also be found on our website
www.balsamcentre.org.uk/adult-activities.html#walking and further updates
are posted on our Facebook group

**A BIG thanks to our volunteers –
without you, this wouldn't be possible!**



The Balsam Centre,
Balsam Park,
Wincanton,
Somerset.
BA9 9HB

Tel: 01963 31842
Email: info@balsamcentre.org.uk

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