



Photo taken by one of our walkers on the Mells Walk on 20th April 2023

Balsam Centre Health Walks

October 2023 - March 2024

What is a Balsam Centre Health Walk?

Health Walks promote walking as an achievable, non-competitive and enjoyable way to improve health and increase physical activity. There are a variety of walks to accommodate absolute beginners to the more experienced. They are a great way to increase your fitness levels, enjoy local natural spaces and meet new people. The walks are all free of charge, but donations are welcome. Walks are led by either Balsam Centre staff or Volunteers, all are trained Health Walk Leaders.

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 1-hour walks aim to maintain or increase general fitness. The walk follows pavements, paths and tracks around Wincanton and the surrounding fields and will include some inclines. There is no need to book for these walks and can be geared to the walkers who turn up. These walks happen every Tuesday, starting and ending at the Balsam Centre, usually finishing with a cup of tea or coffee in the Centre.

Starting Point: The Balsam Centre, Wincanton, BA9 9PA. Grid ref: ST715285

Stourhead Buggy Walks @ 10am, Thursdays

Buggy & Toddler Walks run every other Thursday, meeting at 9:30am for a prompt 10am start from the Visitors Centre at Stourhead.



This is a lovely walk around the beautiful gardens, suitable for buggies and babies in slings.

Entry is free for every adult with a child - extra adults will have to pay the garden entry fee or be National Trust members, (car parking is now also free).




There is no need to book, but all walkers will need to register and collect a pass at The Balsam Centre before the first walk, passes will only be issued to people living within a 10 mile radius of The Balsam Centre, so please take a proof of address with you to register. The walks last about 45 minutes, with the option of ending in the National Trust Cafe if you wish.

Meet outside Stourhead Visitors Centre at 9:30am. Postcode BA12 6QF. Grid ref: ST778339

Long Walks - start location and day will vary each week

Information for these walks are in this brochure, and we request that you please book for these walks by emailing info@balsamcentre.org.uk

These walks are graded by number of boots:

	a fairly level walk of no more than 3 miles
	walks of approximately 2 hours and may include steps, inclines, uneven paths and sometimes stiles
	A more challenging walk of over 5 miles and could include terrain as for 2 boots

Week 1



Monday 2nd October – 10:15am

Leaders: Wendy & Mike

Join the [Evercreech Walking Group](#) for a 7 mile walk around Wincanton area with a refreshment stop at Otter Garden Centre. Please note there are 13 stiles. Please also bring water and your own lunch for a stop along the route.

Meeting point: Outside Balsam Centre

Nearest Postcode: BA9 9HB

Grid Reference: ST714285

What 3 words location: [exonerate.maps.measure](#)

Week 2



Wednesday 11th October – 10am

Leaders: Lorraine & Hilary

Shearwater. Approximately 5 miles by the lake and into the woods, mainly forest paths and one hill.

Meeting point: Shearwater Lake Car Park

Nearest Postcode: BA12 7JJ

Grid Reference: ST854420

What 3 words location: [bedrooms.bulk.ghost](#)

Week 3



Wednesday 18th October – 10am

Leaders: Mike

Martock: An easy walk over fields including the River Parrett Trail. Approximately 4 miles.

Meeting point: Martock Recreation Ground car park (free)

Nearest Postcode: TA12 6JN

Grid Reference: ST463192

What 3 words location: [referral.toward.following](#)

Week 4



Wednesday 25th October – 10am

Leaders: Tim

Marston Park, Tytherington. A flat walk around Marston Park towards Marston Bigot and Trudoxhill. Approx 3.55 miles. Only 2 Stiles. Marston Park has its own eatery, Cafe Nouveau, for coffees and light lunches if you wish to stay.

Meeting point: Sound Training Centre carpark, 2nd entry, next to footpath sign.

Nearest Postcode: BA11 5BW

Grid Reference: ST768453

What 3 words: [loom.surprises.surveyors](#)

Week 5



Day 1st Month – 10am

Leaders: Maureen & Thelma
Bruton, 4-5 miles.
Meeting point: tbc
Nearest Postcode: tbc
Grid Reference: tbc
What 3 words location: tbc

Week 6



Monday 6th November – 10am

Leaders: Mike & Lynda
Bourton and Pen Selwood: exploring the Stour valley around Bourton and Pen Selwood. Approximately 4 miles.
Meeting point: layby at picket fence between Bourton and Zeals
Nearest Postcode: SP8 5AT
Grid Reference: ST780310
What 3 words location: lighters.excavate.send

Week 7



Wednesday 15th November – 10am

Leaders: Tim & Mike
Buckhorn Weston. Flat walk alongside Filly Brook and back via Pitt House Farm. Approx 3.6 miles Stiles TBC.
Meeting point: Stapleton Arms carpark
Nearest Postcode: SP8 5HS
Grid Reference: ST756246
What 3 words: highbrow.fuzzy.surnames

Week 8



Wednesday 22nd November – 10am

Leaders: Lorraine & Hilary
Shillingstone. Approximately 5 miles of flat walking across fields to Hammon and back.
Meeting point: Trailway Car park off A357 and Hayward Lane, west end of Shillingstone
Nearest Postcode: DT11 00X
Grid Reference: ST822119
What 3 words location: committed.dangerously.pushing

Week 9



Wednesday 29th November – 10am

Leaders: Wendy

Evercreech to Milton Clevedon and back through Rodmore Farm.

Meeting point: Evercreech St Peter's Church

Nearest Postcode: BA4 6HX

Grid Reference: ST649386

What 3 words location: [appoints.trial.comedians](https://www.appoints.com)

Week 10



Wednesday 6th December – 10am

Leaders: Peter & Ken

Fifehead Magdalen to Kington Magna. Across, lanes, tracks and fields approx 5 miles.

Meeting point: Adjacent to Fifehead Magdalen church, park on road.

Nearest Postcode: SP8 5RJ

Grid Reference: ST783215

What 3 words location: [wheat.loaders.comply](https://www.wheatloaders.com)

Week 11



Thursday 14th December – 10am

Leaders: Lu & Mike

North Cadbury: 3 mile walk on roads, fairly level, approximately 1 ½ hours

Meeting point: Outside North Cadbury Village Stores, parking along the road

Nearest Postcode: BA22 7DW

Grid Reference: ST636272

What 3 words location: [obligated.define.material](https://www.obligated.define.material)

Week 12



Tuesday 19 December – 10am

Leaders: Lynda

Christmas Walk: A one hour walk from the Balsam Centre, ending with tea/coffee and mince pies in the Cafe at the Balsam Centre.

Meeting point: The Cafe in the Balsam Centre

Nearest Postcode: BA9 9HB

Grid Reference: ST714285

What 3 words location: [exonerate.maps.measure](https://www.exonerate.maps.measure)

Week 13

No walks this week - have a lovely Christmas

Week 14

No walks this week - have a Happy New Year

Week 15



Wednesday 10th January – 10am

Leaders: Tim

South Cadbury. Moderate walk along Folly Lane to Weston Bampfylde and back along the Leyland Trail. Approx 4 miles Stiles.

Meeting point: The Camelot Pub carpark

Nearest Postcode: BA22 7EX

Grid Reference: ST632256

What 3 words location: flamingo.polite.lighter

Week 16



Wednesday 17th January – 10am

Leaders: Wendy & Mike

Alfred's Tower across Stourhead estate to Brewham Lodge Farm and back past Keepers Lodge.

Meeting point: Alfred's Tower Car Park

Nearest Postcode: No suitable postcode

Grid Reference: ST745350

What 3 words location: builds.saves.irrigate

Week 17



Monday 22nd January – 10am

Leaders: Lorraine & Hilary

Cadbury Castle. Approximately 5 miles on footpaths and lanes to Beacon Hill. One hill with great views across the local area.

Meeting point: Castle Car Park

Nearest Postcode: BA22 7HA

Grid Reference: ST632253

What 3 words location: excavated.vitals.oldest

Week 18



Tuesday 30th January – 10am

Leaders: Peter & Ken

East Coker: Over fields, tracks some road walking in rural area to south of Yeovil. Approx. 5 miles.

Meeting point: East Coker village hall car park.

Nearest Postcode: BS35 5SJ

Grid Reference: ST538127

What 3 words location: loving.protected.recipient

Week 19



Friday 9th February – 10am

Leaders: Mike
Sherborne Abbey.
Meeting point: tbc
Nearest Postcode: tbc
Grid Reference: tbc
What 3 words location: tbc

Week 20



Thursday 15th February – 10am

Leaders: Tony & Mike
TBC.
Meeting point: tbc
Nearest Postcode: tbc
Grid Reference: tbc
What 3 words location: tbc

Week 21



Wednesday 21st February – 10am

Leaders: Wendy
Kingsdon through Rookery Farm and back through Coombs
Plantation.
Meeting point: Car Park near playing fields and pub
Nearest Postcode: TA11 7LG
Grid Reference: ST518261
What 3 words location: crystals.poses.amps

Week 22



Wednesday 28th February – 10am

Leaders: Tim
Stourhead Estate Walk.
Meeting point: tbc
Nearest Postcode: tbc
Grid Reference: tbc
What 3 words location: tbc

Week 23



Thursday 7th March – 10am

Leaders: Ken & Peter
Rhyme Intrenseca: Mainly over fields passing nearby villages. 4.5
miles.
Meeting point: tbc
Nearest Postcode: DT9 6JX
Grid Reference: ST582109
What 3 words location: scrubber.meatballs.congested

Week 24



Monday 11th March – 10am

Leaders: Lorraine & Hilary

Tisbury. Approximately 4 miles to Fonthill Lake. A flat walk on grassy paths and roads.

Meeting point: The Avenue Car Park

Nearest Postcode: SP3 6JG

Grid Reference: ST945293

What 3 words location: solicitor.vegetable.pelting

Week 25



Thursday 20th March – 10am

Leaders: Maureen & Thelma

TBC.

Meeting point: tbc

Nearest Postcode: tbc

Grid Reference: tbc

What 3 words location: tbc

Week 26



Thursday 28th March – 10am

Leaders: Tony

Westbury White Horse.

Meeting point: tbc

Nearest Postcode: tbc

Grid Reference: tbc

What 3 words location: tbc

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.

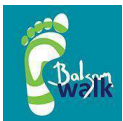
Once you have registered, you can join any walk in the brochure. **Booking is required for "Long" walks**, though not for "Short" Tuesday walks. Walks of any length may be cancelled in exceptional circumstances or weather conditions and those who have booked to attend a long walk will be contacted. If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

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.



Follow us on Facebook

If you are on Facebook join our "Balsam Walking Group", which is a private group where you can share your photos and thoughts about our walks. We hope to update this group if there are any conditions you may need to know about for a particular walk.

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

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>

There is a fantastic video on YouTube called "**23 and ½ hours: What is the single best thing we can do for our health**".

Watch it here - <https://youtu.be/aUaInS6HIGo>

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..?

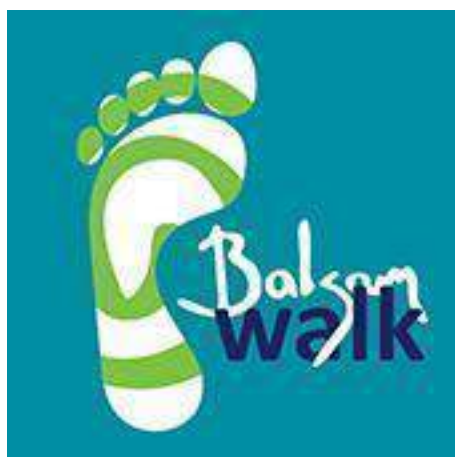
There are several reasons to use walking poles when out walking or trekking. Walking poles help you move across terrain quicker, provide additional support and reduce the amount of effort required thus allowing you to achieve more during your walks.

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. For more tips about walking poles:

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

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!**



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