

USE OF WALKING POLES

Many people find walking poles a boon to their walking – both by lengthening their walking career through protecting their knees, and for the great assistance they afford when walking on tough terrain.

However, you should be careful with your walking poles; although they can be of great benefit to people in terms of balance and support, they can also be a dangerous weapon in the wrong hands.

Some points to consider:

- Be Aware – Make sure you are aware of walkers both ahead of you and behind you. If you're carrying your poles, carry them with the tips forward to avoid accidentally stabbing others.
- Keep your distance – Make sure there is a safe distance between walkers. If someone is crowding you, step aside and let them pass.
(People walking alongside pole users should also be aware of the above, and give the pole user more space.)
- Put Away – If there is a section of the route where you don't need your poles then pack them away.
- Don't Wave – This may be stating the obvious, but try not to wave your poles around in the air needlessly.
- Don't Drag – Try not to drag your poles over stiles or fences because there is the danger of poking someone in the eye. Instead, push them through or over the stile or fence and collect them on the other side.
- Walking poles are a great benefit to many hikers, but users should be careful that they don't make them a hazard to others!