

# COVID-19 Safe Walking

Walking in groups in the current difficult times is a great boost to fitness, both physical and mental. We all know and understand the joys of walking and want to continue with this great pastime. Our walk leaders do all they can to make sure that our walks are both safe and enjoyable for all taking part and safe for anyone we meet on our walks.

One of the main things that we need to do to make sure our walks are safe is to walk at least 2m apart, as per government guidelines. The 1m+ guidance is only there for situations where keeping 2m apart isn't possible and the + indicates other precautions must be taken. We expect that 2m distancing is possible on all our walks, even on narrow paths as it is the individuals responsibility in a group that we give way to anyone coming towards us, backing up to a wider stretch if necessary.

As walkers, we need to be mindful that the walk leader cannot keep looking back to ensure you are 2m apart. It is your responsibility to do so, not the walk leaders. Please be considerate to their Covid-19 instructions at the beginning of the walk which includes keeping 2m away from anyone not in your household.

The main difference we will notice with 2m distancing is that the pinch points on our walks will take longer for everyone to get through safely. Walk leaders will wait for individuals to catch up.

In order keep you COVID safe while out on a walk, please remember the following etiquette:

1. You as walkers are responsible for making the walk COVID safe, both within the group and for anyone you meet or pass while out on the walk.
2. Keep 2m apart from anyone not in your household (measured by you standing side by side with someone with both arms outstretched – if you can touch fingers you are still too close).
3. When approaching a kissing gate, stand 2m back from it until the person in front has passed through. Don't try to hold it open for the person behind as you will get too close.
4. When approaching a gate the first person through should hold it open until all have passed through and then close the gate behind them.
5. When approaching a stile or other obstacle like a bridge over a ditch, make sure the person in front has cleared it and moved away before you start to climb or cross it.
6. If we meet others while on the walk, we should always give way. This may involve backing up to, or waiting in, a wider area to make sure there is room to pass.
7. Do not share equipment (such as poles) or refreshments on a walk with anyone outside your household. This includes sweets unfortunately.
8. Always carry hand sanitiser, gloves and a face covering – COVID standard equipment.

We all know these rules and most want to abide by them. It is human nature to get closer to people we know and when we're enjoying ourselves, we are drawn to others around us. Reminders of the guidance whilst on a walk should be respected, as what we do affects the health of others.

Remember that there may be people on the walk that are less confident than you.

Most of all, please enjoy your walking!