

Proper use of Walking Poles

As a long time user of Walking Poles I have observed that some members do not use them to full advantage, hence this short note.

The grip – hold the pole vertically, place the hand upwards through the loop and close the fist over the loop and handle of the pole.

Walking Poles are useful on any walk, not only when a leader may say “ I recommend Walking Poles because there are some muddy and steep tracks”. In my little cartoon the figure on flat ground is planting the leading pole in a position close to the toe of the opposite leading leg and is pushing on the trailing pole thereby accelerating his progress significantly. You can really “steam along” if you push hard.

When ascending a steep hill plant the leading pole in a position close to the heel or behind the heel of the opposite leading leg and push hard. Repeating this left/right will propel you up the hill with less effort in the legs.

When descending a steep hill plant the pole well ahead of the foot of the opposite leading leg. Place your hand over the head of the handle and put you weight on it. Leaning down the hill (trust your poles) will give you more adhesion to the substrate and prevent you from falling on your backside. If the hill is very steep you may find it better to plant both poles ahead of your feet, walk up to them and repeat the maneuver. Make sure before putting your weight on your poles when going downhill that the segments of the poles are firmly locked, otherwise your nose may make close acquaintance with the ground. Using your poles in this way will save wear and tear on your knees.

If “sauntering” on level ground and you are not using your poles, carry them held together in one hand with the tips pointing down and forward. I have seen many potential impalers (usually female members!) on club walks. Nasty accidents can occur as in the final cartoon!

