

Get Ireland Walking

Tips & Advice for Community Walkers

▶ What do I wear?

Regular runners or walking shoes are fine – they just need to be comfortable. If walking on uneven terrain, forests, woodlands, hilly routes, walking boots would be more advisable to protect the ankles from rolling.

Clothing should be comfortable too – you don't need anything fancy, just a jacket to protect you from the rain. If it's not raining, a light jacket will keep out the wind so you stay warmer. Fleece are great for keeping you warm and easy to tie around your waist if you get too hot, while layers of loose, light clothes instead of one heavy layer, allow you to control your temperature more easily.

Having a warm hat, gloves and a scarf when it's cold will make your walk more comfortable and a sun hat will protect you in the summer. You can take items on and off depending on how you feel. Some people like to carry an umbrella either instead of or in addition to a rain jacket.

If you wear a high visibility jacket or armband,

- ▶ particularly walking around local roads, you will be more easily seen.

What if I am out at night or at dusk?

High visibility reflective clothing or an armband will mean you can be more easily seen by passing traffic. If walking on roads, it's best to stay on the right hand side and keep well in to the edge.

Carrying a light will make it easier for you to find your way as well as helping other to see you. Or

- ▶ you might prefer to walk in a well-lit area or where there are other people around.

Preparing for your walk

Doing a short stretching warm-up at the start will help limber up your body, while a short cool-down at the end is also good.

▶ Do I need to bring anything?

Bringing a small backpack means you don't have to carry things in your hands or pockets.

It's good to carry a mobile phone – you can use it to take photographs, to help track your time and if you need any assistance. If walking on your own it's always good to tell somebody where you are going and how long you expect to be.

It's wise to bring a bottle of water you can sip as you go along.

▶ Making the experience fun!

Why not track your walk – there are apps available to do this.

You can enjoy nature: trees, flowers, scenery and wildlife! Even in city parks you may see squirrels, foxes or birds.

If you are walking with other people you can chat and catch up on their latest news or listen to music or a podcast, just check that you can hear the traffic.

Making it into an adventure or playing a game if you are walking with children should make it more enjoyable for all of you.

▶ Keeping motivated

Keeping a record of your walks will show you how much you have done. If you have an arrangement to walk regularly with somebody else, it's easier to keep going.

Starting to walk at a slow pace and gradually increasing it will help you gain confidence – start off too fast and you may not finish the walk or be put off.