

## Leading a Walk

Never lead a walk before? Fancy having a go? Here are some guidelines to help you.

### Planning the walk

- Start with an area that you have walked in before and you have some familiarity with. Don't be too ambitious for your first attempt!
- Get inspiration from old programmes (see history section of the website), the internet, or walking books.

### Sunday Walks

1. Look for an area that is up to approximately 1 hour's drive from Derby. Most Sunday walks are about 10 to 12 miles long. If you are planning to do a longer walk try to plan a shortcut for those who would prefer not to do the whole distance. The mileage will be put in the programme so make it as accurate as you can.
2. The starting point should be a carpark (not too expensive!) or road parking for at least 6 cars. The place and the O/S grid reference will be put in the programme.
3. The lunch break can be al fresco, but members do appreciate a pub where they can have a drink, a chat and a decent loo!
4. Note the terrain e.g. very hilly or some scrambling is usually classed as a hard walk, some hills is a moderate walk, whilst if there are only 1 or 2 gentle hills this is easy. This too will be noted on the programme.
5. Check that stiles and footpaths are easily accessible. Members prefer not to have to vault over gates!

### Wednesday walks

These should not be more than half an hour's drive from Derby and are less strenuous than the Sunday walks.

1. The starting point should be a pub where members can convene afterwards for a lunchtime meal (not too expensive, and we love deals e.g. 2 for 1!)
2. Check with the pub that they are happy for us to leave cars in their carpark whilst we go for our pre-lunchtime walk. Also check whether they need to know how many will be eating; we usually select from the menu before we start the walk.
3. The walk should be about 5 to 7 miles long and consist of a more gentle terrain than Sunday walks. The pace is usually a little slower.

### For both walks

Ensure that you have tried the walk out in advance preferably with an experienced leader who can point out any pitfalls. The programme secretary or any committee member will be glad to help.

## On the day

1. Make sure that you have a map and a paper copy of the route with you, even if you have a GPS, as they can break down.
2. Do a head count before starting and at various points during the walk. This is especially important after lunchtime as it is easy to leave behind someone who is having a comfort stop.
3. Note if members decide to leave the main party voluntarily to take a different route and if they intend to rejoin the group later.
4. If you have new members or guests joining the walk ensure they know you are the leader and advise them of the distance and the terrain. Ensure they are properly equipped e.g. with decent footwear, waterproofs, drink and food.
5. Guest should give you an emergency contact phone number and an indication of any health problems which might affect their ability to do the walk; it is just a sensible precaution.
6. Ask for a volunteer back-marker if the group is too large to keep an eye on.
7. Check the weather forecast and be prepared to alter a route if it is very wet or icy e.g. a bit more road walking to avoid a very slippery path. If it's foggy keep together, lead at the front, but have back marker.
8. If you mislay someone don't assume that they will just catch up. Stop and ascertain when they were last seen and wait for them, phone their mobile or send an experienced walker to look for them.

As a leader you do not have to be at the front all the time, but whenever you turn off from the current path make sure everyone can see that you have diverted. This might be a good time to do a head count! Also some members appreciate a short break to get their breath back after they have climbed a steep hill.

If you get a bit lost, confused with your map reading or take a wrong path don't panic! Stop, check where you are on the map and ask an experienced member to assist you in getting back on track. No one will mind as we have all done this at some point.

**Enjoy the walk and the experience of leading and just have a go.**



