



MEDIA RELEASE
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**Physiotherapists give thumbs up to Nordic pole walking
and prescribe it for patients with a variety of conditions**

Ottawa (Oct. 19, 2011) — An increasing number of Canadian physiotherapists are realizing the benefits of Nordic pole walking for their patients, adding a rehabilitation dimension to the already-popular fitness trend.

Nordic pole walking boasts an easy-to-learn technique, with little risk to the body. It helps strengthen core muscles, contributes to weight loss and decreases stress on hips and knees. The versatility of the activity makes it appealing to physiotherapists, who see it as ideal for people with mobility issues, or those living with chronic conditions such as arthritis.

While Nordic walking can be practised almost anywhere, it's important to have the right equipment and instruction. "Don't be tempted to use skiing, hiking or trekking poles, which are designed for totally different purposes," says Cathy McNorgan, a physiotherapist and certified Nordic walking instructor. All Nordic poles have a spike tip at the bottom for walking on variable outdoor terrain, covered by a rubber tip that grips sidewalks and other surfaces, to ensure safe use.

Physiotherapists prescribe this exercise to patients who would most benefit from the unique workout. The fluid and rhythmical pattern of walking can help to improve coordination and movement in people in the early stages of Parkinson's disease and multiple sclerosis, for example.

Researchers have discovered another hidden benefit to Nordic walking, which is that it gives patients a good total body and cardiovascular workout without being exhausting — it's effective and efficient. As a result, Nordic walking has proven to be successful with people who need to lose weight and just be more active generally.

"Many health benefits are directly related to how hard you work," says Gail Dechman, an assistant professor in the school of physiotherapy at Dalhousie University. "If people can elevate their heart rates using the Nordic walking technique without feeling like they're working harder, that's fantastic."

To learn more about incorporating Nordic walking into your rehabilitation, therapy or exercise routine, consult a physiotherapist. Find a physiotherapist near you at www.physiotherapy.ca