



# Investigating Physical Activity and Musculoskeletal Pain in Nordic Walkers Using Digital Technology

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## Background

Nordic Walking is a popular fitness walking activity which uses a pair of specially designed poles.

Nordic Walking improves upper and lower body muscular strength, coordination and cardiovascular fitness, providing a full-body workout suitable for all fitness levels, ages and abilities.

Few studies have investigated Nordic Walker's exercise habits.



## Aims

To investigate physical levels and musculoskeletal pain prevalence in Nordic Walkers.

## Methods

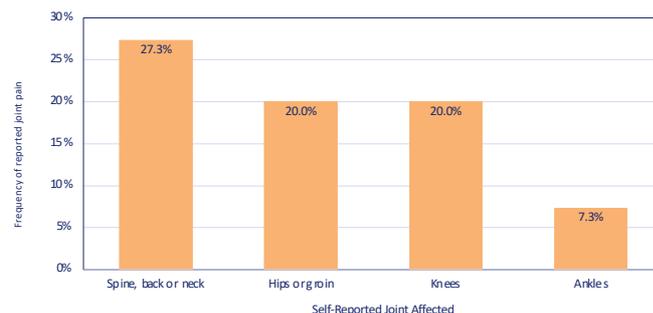
- Data collected as part of 'Running Through' a global prospective cohort study between February to December 2021.
- Baseline data from Nordic Walkers were collected via electronic survey.
- Weekly email messages captured the incidence of pain and injury.
- Walking pace, duration and frequency data was recorded and shared via smartwatches and mobile phones apps.

## Results

### Baseline characteristics

- 55 participants
- 76% female
- Mean age 57 years (SD 10.1)
- Mean body mass index (BMI) 24.1 (SD 4.5)

### Frequency of current self reported joint pain or discomfort



### Weekly participation data

- Data shared for mean of 13 weeks (range 1 to 26 weeks).
- Mean frequency of Nordic Walking participation was 2 times a week (S.D. 1)
- Mean weekly distance recorded 20.9km (range 9.1 to 32.8km)

## Conclusions

- Nordic Walking is especially popular with older adults.
- Nordic Walkers achieve weekly physical activity guidelines despite self-reported musculoskeletal pain.
- Further studies with appropriate technical instruction are needed to investigate if Nordic Walking is a suitable physical activity for specific painful musculoskeletal conditions such as osteoarthritis.



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