



Photo taken on one of our walks in June 2017

Balsam Centre Health Walks

April 2024 - September 2024

What is a Balsam Centre Health Walk?

Health Walks promote walking as an achievable, non-competitive and enjoyable way to improve health and increase physical activity. There are a variety of walks to accommodate absolute beginners to the more experienced. They are a great way to increase your fitness levels, enjoy local natural spaces and meet new people. The walks are all free of charge, but donations are welcome. Walks are led by volunteers who are trained Health Walk Leaders.

Which walk is right for me?

There are different types of Health Walks to accommodate a range of walking experiences and fitness levels.



The Amble – from/to River Cale Cafe @ 10am, Thursdays

The Amble is a slow-paced, short walk (under 30 minutes) on level, stable ground, making it ideal if you haven't done much walking before, or perhaps don't get out of the house that often. With plenty of benches along the way, you can stop as often as you need to.

Starting Point: River Cale Cafe, Wincanton, BA9 9ED. Grid ref: ST708283



Short Walk – from/to the Balsam Centre @ 10am, Tuesdays

These 1-hour walks aim to maintain or increase general fitness. The walk follows pavements, paths and tracks around Wincanton and the surrounding fields and will include some inclines. There is no need to book for these walks and can be geared to the walkers who turn up. These walks happen every Tuesday, starting and ending at the Balsam Centre, usually finishing with a cup of tea or coffee in the Centre.

Starting Point: The Balsam Centre, Wincanton, BA9 9PA. Grid ref: ST715285



Stourhead Buggy Walks @ 10am, Thursdays

Buggy & Toddler Walks run every other Thursday, meeting at 9:30am for a prompt 10am start from the Visitors Centre at Stourhead.

This is a lovely walk around the beautiful gardens, suitable for buggies and babies in slings.

Entry is free for every adult with a child - extra adults will have to pay the garden entry fee or be National Trust members, (car parking is now also free). There is no need to book, but all walkers will need to register and collect a pass at The Balsam Centre before the first walk, passes will only be issued to people living within a 10 mile radius of The Balsam Centre, so please take a proof of address with you to register. The walks last about 45 minutes, with the option of ending in the National Trust Cafe if you wish.

Meet outside Stourhead Visitors Centre at 9:30am. Postcode BA12 6QF. Grid ref: ST778339

Long Walks - start location and day will vary each week

Information for these walks are in this brochure, and we request that you please book for these walks by emailing info@balsamcentre.org.uk

These walks are graded by number of boots:

	a fairly level walk of no more than 3 miles
	walks of approximately 2 hours and may include steps, inclines, uneven paths and sometimes stiles
	A more challenging walk of over 5 miles and could include terrain as for 2 boots

Week 1



Thursday 4th April – 10:00am

Leaders: Lorraine & Hilary

Tisbury. Approximately 4 miles to Fonthill Lake. A flat walk on grassy paths and roads.

Meeting point: The Avenue Car Park

Nearest Postcode: SP3 6JJ

Grid Reference: ST945293

What 3 words location: solicitor.vegetable.pelting

Week 2



Friday 12th April – 10:00am

Leader: Mark

White Sheet Hill from Berwick St John. Moderate 4.5mile (7km) circular walk from Berwick St John up to the trig point at White Sheet Hill (242m) and back down around Berwick Coombe. Duration approx. 2 hrs.

Meeting Point: Outside the Talbot Inn (temporarily closed)

Nearest Postcode: SP7 0HA

Grid Reference: ST947223

What 3 Words location: stream.pythons.stage

Week 3



Tuesday 16th April – 10:00am

Leaders: Peter

Charlton Down-Forston - A approx. 4 mile, rural walk over tracks and fields, no stiles, one longish ascent and accompanying descent..

Meeting point: near fitness centre on Sherren Avenue, Charlton Down.

Nearest Postcode: DT2 9UG

Grid Reference: SY680948

What 3 words location: punk.frostbite.washable

Week 4



Wednesday 24th April – 10:00am

Leaders: Tim

Holton to Maperton - an easy/moderate 3.6 mile walk.

Meeting point: Outside The Old Inn, Holton.

Nearest Postcode: BA9 8AR

Grid Reference: ST685269

What 3 words location: setting.scavenger.handy

Week 5



Friday 3rd May – 10:00am

Leader: Mark

Win Green - This is an 8km (5mile) walk from Tollard Royal up to Win Green (277m) along the Wessex Ridgeway and back down along the Hardy Way. It's a moderate ascent and will take about 2.5 hrs. There is only space for about 5 cars near the pond but parking is available at the King John Inn on the B3081 towards Shaftesbury.

Meeting Point: Small car park near the pond

Nearest Postcode: SP5 5PP

Grid Reference: ST944178

What 3 Words location: bullion.snapping.shameless

Week 6



Wednesday 8th May – 10:00am

Leaders: Tim

Bruton - a circular walk via Gants Mill, 4.0 miles.

Meeting point: Outside Godminster Cheese Shop.

Nearest Postcode: BA10 0EG

Grid Reference: ST685348

What 3 words location: chief.wimp.releases

Week 7



Tuesday 14th May – 10:00am

Leaders: Peter & Pamela

Sherborne, Quarr Community Park - Walk over tracks, fields and lanes in countryside to the north of Sherborne, no stiles, 4.5miles.

Meeting point: near pub and public green space

Nearest Postcode: DT9 4JD

Grid Reference: ST837175

What 3 words location: conqueror.misted.pranced

Week 8



Wednesday 22nd May – 10:00am

Leaders: Lorraine & Hilary

Shillingstone - a fairly flat, approx. 5 mile walk taking us across fields and the North Dorset railway to Hamoon .

Meeting point : Railway Car parkoff A357

Nearest postcode: DT11 0OX

Grid reference: ST822119

what 3 words: committed.dangerously.pushing

Week 9



Tuesday 28th May – 10:00am

Leaders: Peter & Pamela

Fiddleford Manor/Mill - 4.5 miles, few stiles, some gentle inclines. Over fields, tracks and lanes.

Meeting point: in the English Heritage car park off the A357.

Nearest Postcode: DT10 2BX

Grid Reference: ST801134

What 3 words location: harshest.cleans.unzipped

Week 10



Thursday 6th June – 10:00am

Leaders: Lu

Haytesbury Chalk Stream - A lovely walk alongside the River Wylye and across lush water-meadows. This is an easy, mostly level walk but has a few stiles. Approximately 4 miles.

Meeting point: Outside the Angel Inn, park along road.

Nearest Postcode: BA12 0ED

Grid Reference: ST927425

What 3 words location: expel.elevator.spurring

Week 11



Wednesday 12th June – 10:00am

Leaders: Lorraine & Hilary

Shearwater - a lovely walk, approximately 5 miles mainly along forest paths and one hill.

Meeting point : shearwater lake car park

Nearest postcode: BA12 7JJ

Grid reference: ST854420

what 3 words: bedrooms.bulk.ghost

Week 12



Wednesday 19th June – 10:00am

Leaders: Maureen & Thelma

Bruton Station to Flood Prevention Dam.

Meeting point: tbc

Nearest Postcode: tbc

Grid Reference: tbc

What 3 words location: tbc

Week 13



Wednesday 26th June – 10:00am

Leaders: Tim

Stourton to Beech Clump via White Sheet lane, moderate, 3.8 miles walk.

Meeting point: Outside bus shelter, Stourton

Nearest Postcode: BA12 6QG

Grid Reference: ST781340

What 3 words location: reduction.beaks.shark

Week 14



Tuesday 2nd July – 10:00am

Leaders: Peter

Shillingstone/Hammoon - Gentle walk, partly by River Stour, over fields, tracks and lanes, few stiles. 4.5 miles.

Meeting point: Meet in the car park off A357 near old railway bridge over a side road.

Nearest Postcode: DT11 00X

Grid Reference: ST822119

What 3 words location: committed.dangerously.pushing

Week 15



Wednesday 10th July – 10:00am

Leaders: Tim

Nunney Castle to Whatley - an easy, 3.2 mile walk.

Meeting point: The Market Place, Nunney

Nearest Postcode: BA11 4LY

Grid Reference: ST736456

What 3 words location: glorified.implanted.squad

Week 16



Thursday 18th July – 10:00am

Leaders: Peter

Fifehead Magdalen - Walk over fields near or with views of River Stour, several stiles. 4.5 miles.

Meeting point: near the parish church, parking in adjacent street in village

Nearest Postcode: SP8 5RT

Grid Reference: ST783215

What 3 words location: wheat.loaders.comply

Week 17



Thursday 25th July – 10:00am

Leaders: Lu

North Cadbury - a walk through fields and along country lanes.

Meeting point: Outside Catash Inn, North Cadbury

Nearest Postcode: BA22 7DH

Grid Reference: ST634273

What 3 words location: fortress.tonality.hilltop

Week 18



Tuesday 30 July – 10:00am

Leaders: Peter

Evershot - A country park walk over to Melbury Osmund and back, with possibility of views of deer in adjacent deer park.

Meeting point: at the triangle at the east end of the village, park on the nearby road.

Nearest Postcode: DT2 0JS

Grid Reference: SY576047

What 3 words location: tolerates.spoils.threaded

Week 19



Friday 2 August – 10:00am

Leaders: Mark

TBC.

Nearest Postcode: tbc

Grid Reference: tbc

What 3 words location: tbc

Week 20



Wednesday 14th August – 10:00am

Leaders: Lorraine & Hilary

Stavordale and Stourhead Western Estate approximately 5 miles on forest tracks, can be muddy after rain.

Meeting point : Hunters Lodge Car park, Leigh Common

Nearest postcode: BA9 8LD

Grid reference: ST743298

What 3 words: tasks.piper.claw

Week 21



Thursday 22nd August – 10:00am

Leaders: Peter

East Coker - A walk over parkland and farmland to the west and south of East Coker. Several stiles, some lane walking. 5miles.

Meeting point: East Coker village hall car park

Nearest Postcode: BA22 9JJ

Grid Reference: ST538127

What 3 words location: piglets.edicts.boggles

Week 22



Thursday 29th August – 10:00am

Leaders: Lu

Old and New Wardour Castle: A ruined medieval castle and its 18th-century successor are linked by this undulating and interesting 4 mile walk near the northern edge of Cranbourne Chase. The route passes through a varied and attractive landscaped parkland, farmland and woodland.

Meeting point: Old Wardour Castle Car Park (The free car park is located approximately 70 meters from the site entrance)

Nearest Postcode: SP3 6RJ

Grid Reference: ST938263

What 3 words location: irrigated.expect.havens

Week 23



Wednesday 4th September – 10:00am

Leaders: Tim

Sparkford to Sutton Montis - an easy, 3.4 mile walk.

Meeting point: Old Parlour Farm Shop, Weston Bampfylde

Nearest Postcode: BA22 7HY

Grid Reference: ST609252

What 3 words location: nightfall.budding.snowballs

Week 24



Tuesday 10th September – 10:00am

Leaders: Peter

Charlton Down - A rural walk to Charminster over fields, tracks with some lane walking, near and with views of River Cerne. 5miles. No stiles.

Meeting point: near the fitness centre on Sherren Avenue in Charlton Down

Nearest Postcode: DT2 9 UG

Grid Reference: SY680948

What 3 words location: punk.frostbite.washable

Week 25



Wednesday 18th September – 10:00am

Leaders: Maureen & Thelma

Bruton Station to Lamyatt.

Meeting point: tbc

Nearest Postcode: tbc

Grid Reference: tbc

What 3 words location: tbc

Week 26



Wednesday 25th September – 10:00am

Leaders: Lorraine & Hilary

TBC.

Meeting point: tbc

Nearest Postcode: tbc

Grid Reference: tbc

What 3 words location: tbc

How do I join a Walk?

If you would like to participate in any of the Health Walks please complete a registration form before attending your first walk - you can do this by either dropping into the Centre and complete a registration form or completing the form online.

Once you have registered, you can join any walk in the brochure. **Booking is required for "Long" walks**, though not for our other walks. Walks of any length may be cancelled in exceptional circumstances or weather conditions and those who have booked to attend a long walk will be contacted. If in doubt, please contact the Centre.

We advise that you take part in walks appropriate for your health and fitness levels. If you have not participated in much exercise recently or are worried about your health, please consult your doctor before taking part or increasing your physical activity levels.

A waterproof coat, removable layers and supportive, waterproof footwear is recommended.

A parent or guardian must supervise any children under the age of 16. If you wish to bring a young child, please phone and book your place as some walks may not be suitable for the very young.

Regrettably dogs are not allowed on the walks.



Follow us on Facebook

If you are on Facebook join our "Balsam Walking Group", which is a private group where you can share your photos and thoughts about our walks. We hope to update this group if there are any conditions you may need to know about for a particular walk.

Interested in becoming a walk leader?

We are in need of new walk leaders and back-markers. If the idea appeals, we provide free training. For details, telephone Andrew Pattie 01963 31842 or email info@balsamcentre.org.uk

Why walk?

It's widely acknowledged that walking from A to B is better for the environment and air quality in our towns and villages than using our diesel and petrol powered cars.

Walking is undeniably good for us too. It may:

- improve your mood
- reduce **stress**
- manage **anxiety**
- help you sleep better
- increase your energy
- help you to cope with difficult times
- improve your confidence and self-esteem
- reduce the risk of **depression**

These points are explored in further detail on:

<https://www.bupa.co.uk/newsroom/ourviews/walking-health>

There is a fantastic video on YouTube called "**23 and ½ hours: What is the single best thing we can do for our health**".

Watch it here - <https://youtu.be/aUaInS6HIGo>

A *morning walk* specifically may have many potential benefits. "**Just one thing**" by Dr Michael Moseley first aired on BBC Radio 4 in March 2021. In the April 10th episode he explores why an **Early Morning Walk** is beneficial to our health, and on May 15th why **Green Spaces** could benefit your brain and body. The episodes are available on BBC Sounds App or

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p09by3yy/episodes/player?page=1>

And there's always NHS guidance:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/walking-for-health/>

Any cited sources of information are given in good faith and are a small representation of what is available. The Balsam Centre is not advocating a particular viewpoint and individual judgement should be used when accessing such information.

Have you considered using walking poles..?

There are several reasons to use walking poles when out walking or trekking. Walking poles help you move across terrain quicker, provide additional support and reduce the amount of effort required thus allowing you to achieve more during your walks.

When used correctly walking poles can significantly increase your pace which has additional health benefits. Walking poles improve posture, especially important if you are carrying a load. For more tips about walking poles:

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/news/walk-magazine/reviews/2012/september/walking-poles-buyers-guide.aspx>

The list of walks can also be found on our website <https://www.balsamcentre.org.uk/health-walks> and further updates are posted on our Facebook group

**A BIG thanks to our volunteers –
without you, this wouldn't be possible!**



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