



Photo taken by Linda on the Babcary walk in May 2025

Balsam Centre Health Walks

July - Sept 2025

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



Wednesday 2 July – 10:00am

Leaders: Tony

Ebbor Gorge - The 4.5 mile walk takes us down the gorge and heads towards Wookey Hole and then back up affording fine views of the Somerset countryside. There is a steep descent on steps near to the start and then two moderate ascents- as is always the case we can take these slowly with adequate stops.

Do bring water.

It is a lovely spot to have a picnic after the walk so if weather is good feel free to bring a picnic along, otherwise there are pubs at Wookey, Priddy and Wells.

Meeting Point: The Ebbor Gorge Car Park, situated off Deerleap out of Wookey Hole.

Nearest Postcode: BA5 1EL

What 3 Words location: stroke.rave.food



Tuesday 8 July – 10:00am

Leaders: Peter

Fiddleford Mill / Piddles Wood – A walk over fields and through a wood, along tracks and lanes. A section of steep steps down to A357. 5 miles

Meeting point: English Heritage car park

Nearest Postcode: DT10 2BX

what3words: harshest.cleans.unzipped



Wednesday 16 July – 10:00am

Leaders: Wendy

Evercreech - approximately 4 miles.

Meeting point: Meet outside the Church

Nearest Postcode: BA4 6HX

What 3 words location: dozen.skimmers.blankets



Monday 21 July – 10:00am

Leaders: Sally

Stourhead Estate – A circular walk around the estate.

Approximately 5 miles.

Meeting point: In the Main Car Park for Stourhead

Nearest Postcode: BA12 6QR



Wednesday 30 July – 10:00am

Leaders: Tony

Mells – Starting at the village of Mells we walk down by the river past the industrial archeologically interesting site of the Old Fussells Iron works turning east through Great Elm. For those having done this walk before I am taking an alternative route via the Colliers Way cycle/footpath taking us along the route of the old train line. It is then a gentle meander downwards to Mells entering the village via the Church graveyard where Seigfried Sasoon's grave can be found.

The end of the walk can be rewarded with a lunch or coffee at the Mells Walled Garden cafe. - highly recommended.

Meeting point: The Village Car Park, Longfield

Nearest Postcode: BA11 3PZ

What 3 words location: fuel.improves.influence



Thursday 7 August – 10:00am

Leaders: Nigel & Wendy

Stoke Trister – approximately 4 miles.

Meeting point: Meet outside the Balsam Centre

Nearest Postcode: BA9 9HB

What 3 words location: axed.marbles.roadshow



Tuesday 12 August – 10:00am

Leaders: Peter

Evershot - Stroll through parkland to Melbury Osmund and return.

Meeting point: On roadside near triangle in village. 4 miles

Nearest Postcode: DT2 0JS

what3words: toleration.spoils.threads



Wednesday 20 August – 10:00am

Leaders: Lorraine & Hilary

Burrington Combe – A 5 mile walk to Beacon Batcch, the highest point in the Mendip hills, with spectacular views on a clear day.

Meeting point: Car park on The Combe, Burrington

Nearest Postcode: BS40 7TZ

What 3 words location: costs.polar.expecting



Wednesday 27 August – 10:00am

Leaders: Sally

Castle Cary – A circular walk from Castle Cary to Hadspen, mainly along fields and tracks, with some road walking. Approximately 4.5 miles.

Meeting point: Millbrook Gardens Car Park

Nearest Postcode: BA7 7EE

Tuesday 2 September – 11:30am

Walk leaders meeting



Thursday 4 September – 10:00am

Leaders: Nigel & Wendy

Ilminster – approximately 4 miles.

Meeting point: Meet in Rose Mills Car Park

Nearest Postcode: TA19 9PS

What 3 words location: avoid.uppermost.magpie



Tuesday 9 September – 10:00am

Join the Tuesday morning walk - this is a 1 hour walk around Wincanton.

Meeting point: The Cafe in the Balsam Centre

Nearest Postcode: BA9 9QR

What 3 words location: dares.replaying.thinking



Monday 15 September – 10:00am

Leaders: Sally

Mere – A circular walk from Mere across to White Sheet Hill, taking us across fields and along tracks with beautiful views across the 3 counties front the top of White Sheet Hill.

Meeting point: Salisbury Street Car Park, Opposite the Butt of Sherry Pub

Nearest Postcode: BA12 6DS



Tuesday 23 September – 10:00am

Leaders: Peter

Charlton Horethorne - Rural walk over fields, lanes to the west of the village. 4 miles

Meeting point: On roadside at or near pub and village shop in the village centres

Nearest Postcode: DT9 4NL

What 3 words location: worlds.refutes.media



Wednesday 1 October – 10:00am

Leaders: Mark

Mere - A 4.7 mile walk which will include Castle Hill, Burton and Charnage to the east.

Meeting point: The Walnut Tree in Mere

Nearest Postcode: BA12 6BH

What 3 words location: science.teaches.marketing

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!**



The Balsam Centre,
Balsam Park,
Wincanton,
Somerset.
BA9 9HB

Tel: 01963 31842
Email: [**info@balsamcentre.org.uk**](mailto:info@balsamcentre.org.uk)

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