

# Get moving to health



INSTRUCTOR Alan Keane (right) puts fledgling Nordic walkers through their paces in Alexandra Park

## HAVE YOU TRIED . . . NORDIC WALKING

# Stride out and boost fitness

NORDIC walking is the latest craze to hit Oldham. The practice was developed in Finland in the early 1930s as an off-season training method for competitive cross-country skiers.

It involves walking with poles, and supports people with a range of conditions to walk their way to a healthier lifestyle.

Nordic walking is claimed to be one of the most sociable and effective exercise techniques around.

From the social walker enjoying the outdoors with friends, to the elite athlete needing sports specific cross training, Nordic walking (or Nordic running) is suitable for everyone.

Good technique enables walkers to increase the work of the upper body, slightly exaggerating normal walking movement without changing the natural rhythm of normal walking.

It works the upper and lower body at the same time, strengthening the back, legs and arms, and reducing neck and shoulder tension, as well as improving heart and lung capacity.



WALK this way . . . Gaynor Keane puts her best foot forward to practice Nordic walking

Oldham-based Alan Keane is one of the country's 300 trained instructors, and is running a pilot project on Thursdays in September in Oldham's Alexandra Park, from 10am until noon, which is restricted

to residents of Medlock Vale, Alexandra, St Mary's and Coldhurst wards.

The scheme is a partnership between Oldham Primary Care Trust and Oldham Community Leisure, and uses Neighbourhood Renewal Fund money in a bid to improve health.

Alan explained: "It's a fast-growing sport and really good for everyone, particularly those with injuries and ailments, as well as older people."

Nordic walking uses specially designed poles, and can be done by anyone who wants to improve their condition and well-being in the outdoors.

The poles provide extra support and safety for elderly people at one end of the spectrum, and at the other they offer a challenge and variety to training for athletes,

They make walking easier on the joints and support the spine.

Nordic walking can also provide relief for anyone with restrictions or complaints of the spine, hip joints, knees or ankles, and can help people with heart problems, conditions such as diabetes, rheumatism and breathing difficulties, or who are overweight to exercise.

Walking at a gentle pace using the poles is said to burn around 20 per cent more calories than normal walking, with more energetic walking using up to 46 per cent more calories.

Alan is also planning to run courses aimed at individuals or groups, and estimates it takes three or four sessions to get the technique right before people can go off walking on their own.

For more information, contact Alan on 07808-770341.

## Workout of the week



Rhinos Gym,  
35 Ripponden  
Road, Oldham.  
Phone: 0161-  
627 4500.

IT'S week 14 of our workout series and this week we go inside Rhino's Gym at 35 Ripponden Road, Oldham, where owner Chris Edwards (top) and manager Dave Elson (below) demonstrate the bench press— excellent for toning the chest.

Dave begins holding the weight in the air and slowly brings it down to his chest before pushing the weight up again in a lock out position, to complete the exercise.

Each week we shall be visiting local gymnasiums and health clubs in an effort to keep readers up with the pace for a healthier and fitter lifestyle.



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