

Healthy Walks in Mid Sussex



Your guide to FREE
Healthy Walks in Mid Sussex



Healthy Walks

Welcome to the Mid Sussex healthy walking scheme, your first step to a healthier lifestyle. Our scheme gives you the chance to undertake walking in a friendly, supportive and supervised environment, exploring areas that you may be unfamiliar with in the Mid Sussex District.

We have leaders at the front and the back of the group so that everyone can walk at a comfortable pace. The walks are of varying levels to allow for different standards of walkers and progression as fitness improves. They start at Level 1 through to Level 5 to help you make a decision on which walks are suitable for you.

We do ask that a health questionnaire is completed prior to a walk, this can be done on the day of your first walk with us. If you are very new to exercise or are unsure about walking, especially if you have any medical conditions, we strongly recommend you speak to your doctor first.

Who can attend the walks?

Anyone is welcome, there are no age limits, but an adult must accompany children. Well-behaved sociable dogs are also welcome, but they must be put on a lead when asked as we may be walking through farmland or crossing roads.

What should I wear?

Wear suitable comfortable clothes for the weather conditions on the day (layers are better than one heavy jumper as you can warm up quickly once the walking begins). Comfortable shoes are fine for level 1 walks; for higher levels, walking boots are ideal as they support the ankles and provide some grip in muddy conditions. Wellington boots can be uncomfortable to walk in over distances, but are useful when the ground conditions are very wet and muddy. A waterproof jacket is recommended for the colder and wetter days, while suncream, a hat and a drink of water will be needed for those hot summer days.



Walking For Health (WfH)

Walking for Health is the largest national body promoting and setting the standards for led health walks.

Mid Sussex Healthy Walks is a WfH accredited scheme, having successfully demonstrated that we meet the required criteria.

This includes offering led walks for beginners, meeting the WfH safety and insurance standards for all walks and collecting basic monitoring information.



Healthy Walk Levels

Walks are graded from Level 1 (easy), through to Level 5 (advanced) so there is something for everyone. Each level is described below for you to select which level or levels are suitable. If you require more information on this please contact the Rangers. If you are new to walking or recovering from illness or injury it is advisable to speak to your GP before commencing a new activity, such as walking.

Level 1

These walks last for 30 minutes and are at a relaxed easy pace. They take place on surfaced paths that aim to be relatively flat, although some slight inclines are unavoidable. It is an ideal way to start walking if you are new to it or recovering from illness or injury. These walks do not include stiles and are wheelchair and pushchair friendly.

Level 2

Walks lasting between 30 minutes and 1 hour, covering a distance of 1½ to 2½ miles. They may take place off road on unsurfaced paths, twittens and public rights of way. There may be some small hills. These walks do not include stiles.

Level 3

These walks last between 1 and 1½ hours, up to a maximum of 3 miles in length, in Local Nature Reserves and on public rights of way. Stiles and hills may be encountered.

Level 4

Lasting between 1½ and 2 hours, these walks are between 3 and 5 miles. Stiles will be encountered and terrain may be relatively rough and steep.

Level 5

Expect a brisker pace on these walks lasting between 2 and 3 hours. Distance can be between 4 and 7 miles depending on the terrain, which could include some long and/or steep hills. Stiles will be encountered on these walks.

All times and mileages are for an approximate guide. Recent weather conditions will have an impact on the ground conditions and therefore difficulty of the walk.

Our walks programme is available on the Mid Sussex District Council website, or can be sent to you by contacting the Rangers.

Mid Sussex Healthy Walks are coordinated by the Mid Sussex District Council Park Rangers. The walks are led by the Rangers and trained Volunteer Walk Leaders. If you enjoy walking you may wish to consider becoming a Walk Leader. Please contact the Rangers for more details and to find out about the free training day.




Health Benefits of Walking

There are of course the health benefits of walking, which include:

- reducing high blood pressure
- lowering the risk of certain types of cancer
- helping to control body weight
- lowering the risk of heart disease and stroke
- reducing the risk of diabetes
- making you feel good
- giving you more energy
- reducing stress
- helping you sleep better

Walking is the perfect activity for health as almost everyone can do it, it's a chance to make new friends, it's free and you can start slowly and build up gently. We hope that our walks will be both an enjoyable and sociable experience.





Mid Sussex has some of the most beautiful and varied countryside in the South of England. Starting in the north of the district is the High Weald, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), further south is the Low Weald and the South Downs National Park with spectacular views of the District and beyond.

A number of long distance trails run through the District; including the South Downs Way, Worth Way, Forest Way, Vanguard Way, High Weald Landscape Trail and Sussex Border Path. Various parts of these trails are included on many of our walks.

Also providing much variety are the many Nature Reserves, Woodland Trust Reserves, National Trust and Forestry Commission land. The different reserves and areas provide a variety of habitats that support a wealth of flora and fauna.

To find out more information and to request a walks programme please contact the Park Rangers.

Park Ranger Service
Leisure and Sustainability
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

Tel: 01444 477561 Fax: 01444 477464

Walk Cancellations: 01444 477110 (recorded message)

rangers@midsussex.gov.uk

For further information (including downloadable walks programme) visit:
www.midsussex.gov.uk/healthywalks

