

Walking in Halton's Green Flag Sites

Halton Borough Council now boasts 12 prestigious Green Flag Awards for its parks and nature reserves. Halton is ranked in the top 6 councils in England and Wales for the number of Green Flag Awards achieved.

The Green Flag Award is the national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales and is run by the environmental charity, Keep Britain Tidy, Green Space and British Trust Conservation Volunteers. The scheme began in 1996 as a means of recognising and rewarding the best green spaces in the country.

Halton won its first Green Flag Award in 1999 for Pickering's Pasture Local Nature Reserve and the site has regained its flag every year since. The other Green Flag Award winners are Hale Park, Clinton Wood Local Nature Reserve, Hough Green Park, Victoria Park, Spike Island, Victoria Promenade in Widnes and Phoenix Park, Runcorn Town Hall Park, Rock Park, Runcorn Hill Park and Local Nature Reserve, and Wigg Island Community Park in Runcorn.

For further information about Green Flag sites visit: www.halton.gov.uk or call Parks and Countryside services.

Note. Green Flag Awards are given on an annual basis and winners must reapply every year to renew their Green Flag status. The information in this booklet is correct at time of print.



Urbanwalks™

Urbanwalks the company have mapped, designed and produced this Green Flag Parks walking leaflet for Halton Borough Council. For more information about our products, activity solutions and consultancy services, please visit us at: www.urbanwalks.co.uk or call 0870 242 7507



Useful information

Sports Development Team

For further information on sporting opportunities and clubs in Halton call: **0303 333 4300**

Parks and Countryside Service

For further information on green flag sites and park events in Halton call: **0303 333 4300 ext 4061 / 4124**

Ring for a FREE Step-o-metre:

If you are planning to take part in any of the green walking routes in this leaflet and would like to monitor your steps, why not ring to register for a free step-o-metre. Call Paula Parle on **0303 333 4300 ext 4190** to register. Available while stocks last.

Neighbourhood Travel Team

For further information and assistance with planning routes (walk, cycle or public transport), to employment, training, education or health facilities call Freephone: **0800 195 3173**

Sport England

To find out where to 'get active' in your local area visit: www.activeplaces.com

NHS Direct Online

For general medical information please visit: www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk or call **0845 46 47**

Cheshire Police

For general advice on keeping you safe: www.cheshire.police.uk or call **0151 424 7431 / 01928 713 456**

For further information

For further information about this leaflet and on physical activity opportunities or lead health walks in Halton, call: **Paula Parle, Health & Physical Activity Development Officer on: 0303 333 4300 ext 4190** or visit our website: www.halton.gov.uk



SIX green flag walks

in Runcorn & Widnes

Welcome to Green Flag Walks

Urbanwalks is a vehicle to get communities moving again. The company has a simple philosophy to get people enjoying more activity, more often in their everyday environment.

Working in partnership with Halton Borough Council's Health & Physical Activity Development Officer, Urbanwalks have produced this walking leaflet to promote the green flag parks and nature reserves in Runcorn and Widnes. The Urbanwalks leaflets are designed to support individuals to be habitually active within their local environment and to easily meet the recommended levels of activity. This leaflet encourages users to utilise Halton's local green flag sites within the urban environment.

The Urbanwalks concept is recognised by the Department for Transport as an example of good practice in walking promotion.

Health benefits of walking

Significant health benefits can be obtained by taking the right amount of physical activity.

The current adult recommendation is at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity on five or more days of the week. Alarmingly, only about 37% of men and 25% of women currently achieve the recommended levels. Brisk walking is the perfect activity to help you meet the current recommendations.

Benefits of regular physical activity

Reduce high blood pressure – Moderate intensity activity, such as brisk walking, appears to be at least as effective in reducing blood pressure as more vigorous activity.

Prevention of Diabetes – Exercise greatly reduces the risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes.

Helps reduce weight – Physical activity in combination with a healthy diet can help to reduce weight and maintain weight loss.

Mental health benefits – Activity can help to reduce anxiety and depression. It also helps to improve self confidence.

Reduces risk of falls – Especially in the elderly. Physical activity can improve balance, co-ordination and joint flexibility.

Prevents development of Osteoarthritis and Osteoporosis in certain groups.

Increases strength in your heart, lungs and bones.

Improves your mobility and general well-being.

Provides you with more energy and promotes a better night's sleep.

How much walking should I do?

Walking will only contribute to the maintenance and improvement of health if it is of sufficient intensity and regularity, and is performed for a sufficient length of time. However, any walking is better than none. People may need to build up their level of activity gradually and for most inactive people gentle strolling is a good start point.

Frequency – Most days of the week (at least 5).

Intensity – At a pace faster than a stroll (see How will I feel? section).

Time – Ideally this should be one continuous session of activity of 30 minutes, but 3 periods of 10 minutes or 2 periods of 15 minutes will work just as well.

How will I feel?

Whilst being physically active you may feel some changes happening to the body, these are normal for everyone, and here is a list to help you understand.

You may feel a little out of breath, this is fine as long as you are able to hold a conversation without gasping for air.

You may feel a little clammy and warm, which is due to increased blood flow around the body.

You may feel a little aching in your muscles (calf, thighs etc). This is due to the body undertaking increased activity. Ensure you work at a moderate level and **do not** over do it.

What will I need?

Good footwear with laces so that the foot has support. Your footwear does not have to be expensive just sensible.

Do not wear shoes of the slip-on variety or those with elevated heels.

Take some water with you. Make sure you don't allow your-self to become thirsty as this indicates that you are dehydrated. Drink little sips often, especially if you are sweating.

Walking technique

Poor posture can lead to injury. Many adults suffer from back or neck pain at some time in their life; these conditions are often associated with poor posture.

During your walk the focus should be on your posture firstly and secondly having a natural leg and arm action.

Head – The head should be centred, in line with the spine. The chin should be parallel with the floor. Eyes should be looking forward.

Shoulders – Relax your neck and shoulder muscles. The shoulders need to be down and back and not rounded.

Chest & upper spine – The chest should be lifted and spine upright not slumped forward.

Arms – The arm swing should be natural and comfortable, it is important that the arm swing should not cross the centre of the body.

Legs – The length of each stride should be comfortable. Stride length will vary amongst individuals and will depend on your leg length, hamstring tightness and hip rotation.

Foot placement – The heel should touch the ground first with each stride then the ball of the foot, then your toes in that order. Always walk in a straight line.

Get active!

In Britain today 70% of the population are inactive, with one in five adults now classed as obese. Inactivity is now recognised as a major health and social burden costing the economy £8.2 billion per annum in England alone.

Remember; every step counts – make the 'active' choice every time!

Use these routes to help you on your way to 10,000 steps a day.

Be healthy, stay safe and have fun.



1

Runcorn Phoenix Park

1. Standing with your back to the Phoenix Park Centre turn left to walk along passing the play park then take your 1st left along pathway after the grass.
2. Walk straight ahead into woodland area climbing up the large steps straight ahead of you, ignoring the 1st set of steps on your left.
3. Half way up the steps take your 1st left and walk along the inclined path until you arrive at some bollards then turn left and follow the path through the gate and along Norton Lane passing the play park on your left.
4. Carefully cross over road to continue along Norton Lane passing a roundabout after the traffic lights turn left onto Norton Village then turn right at the end onto Gooseberry Lane.
5. Continue walking straight ahead and carefully cross the road onto the cycle pathway. Just before the bridge turn left and walk along the canal pathway keeping the canal on your right hand side.
6. At the next bridge follow pathway up to bridge level then continue straight ahead along the canal. Exit the canal path at your 3rd bridge then turn left back into Phoenix Park following the path round to the right until you arrive back at the Phoenix Park Centre.

- Distance = Three miles / 7200 steps
- This walk should take around 45-50 minutes
- A-Z Street Atlas, Page 166, Grid ref. B4

2

Runcorn Runcorn Hill

1. Starting at the bandstand in Runcorn Hill walk along to the steps with the tennis courts on your right hand side, then turn right and follow the road around.
2. Turn left onto Highlands Road. Now carefully cross over on to the right hand side. As the path runs out carefully cross back over onto the left hand side.
3. At the end of Highlands Road turn left on to Weston Road and continue walking taking care as the pathway becomes narrow.
4. Bear left with the road staying on Weston Road and walk along passing the houses on your left until you arrive at the public footpath sign, ignoring the 1st bridal pathway.
5. Turn left up the footpath, bear right at the fork and walk straight ahead through Runcorn Hill and down the steps onto a woodlands path.
6. Turn right onto the pathway and continue walking straight ahead until you arrive at a gate. Walk through the gate and straight ahead to the bandstand where you started.

Please Note. You may need a change of footwear as Runcorn Hill and the woodlands can get muddy.

- Distance = One and a half miles / 3600 steps
- This walk should take around 20-25 minutes
- A-Z Street Atlas, Page 167, Grid ref. F2



3

Runcorn Wigg Island

1. Starting at the Visitor Centre take the pathway straight ahead of you and walk along keeping the River Mersey on your left hand side.
2. Continue walking passing the main car park and keeping to the left hand pathway until you arrive at a flight of steps.
3. Walk down the steps then turn left and walk along with the old canal on your right hand side.
4. Follow this pathway along passing the lagoon reed bed on your right until you arrive at a T-junction.
5. Take the left pathway and continue walking until you arrive at the overspill car park with 3 green gates. Take the gate to the right and follow the pathway past the activity arena on your left.
6. At the end of the pathway turn left back onto the pathway you started on and retrace your steps back to where you started.

- Distance = Two miles / 4800 steps
- This walk should take around 30-35 minutes
- A-Z Street Atlas, Page 153, Grid ref. D4



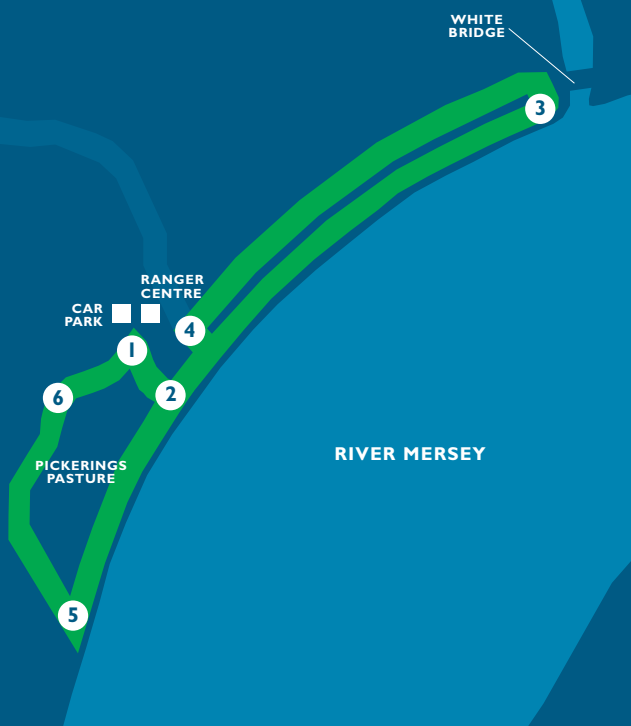
Please Note. Take care if choosing to take the grassed pathway at point 3, as this area can get muddy.

4

Widnes Pickerings Pasture

1. Starting in the car park walk through the gates to your right and follow pathway straight ahead towards the River Mersey.
2. Turn left at the T junction and walk along towards the white bridge.
3. Just before the white bridge take a sharp left turn up onto a grass pathway behind the trees. Alternatively turn around and retrace your steps back to the T junction.
4. At the end of the grassed pathway turn left and walk back along to the T junction.
5. Continue walking past the T junction and with the River Mersey on your left hand side then take the 1st pathway to your right.
6. Follow the pathway along taking the next pathway on your right again and continue walking until you arrive back at the car park.

- Distance = One and three quarters of a mile / 4200 steps
- This walk should take around 25-30 minutes
- A-Z Street Atlas, Page 132, Grid ref. A5



5

Widnes Victoria Park

1. Starting at the Victoria Park Pavilion take the pathway to your left and walk along passing the skate park on your right hand side.
2. Bear right at the fork and walk past the war memorial, then bear right again so the skate park is on your right hand side.
3. Bear left just before the lake and walk three quarters of the way around the lake.
4. Bear left with pathway ahead of you walking towards the Fairfield Road exit.
5. Turn right with the pathway to stay in the park and walk straight ahead until you arrive back at the Pavilion.

- Distance = One mile / 2400 steps
- This walk should take around 15-20 minutes
- A-Z Street Atlas, Page 132, Grid ref. B2



6

Widnes – Spike Island & Victoria Promenade

1. Starting across the road from the Transporter Bridge House turn left to walk down onto Victoria Promenade.
2. Continue along the promenade then at the end turn left up the slope and right onto Terrace Road.
3. Take your next right turn onto Trans Pennine Trail pathway and follow pathway to the locks.
4. At the locks turn right and cross over the water to follow pathway straight ahead onto Spike Island.
5. Continue walking then at the next bridge cross over the water again and turn left to follow pathway along to the locks.
6. At the locks take the pathway to the right up to the main road then turn left onto Upper Mersey Road and continue straight along until you arrive back where you started.

- Distance = One and a half miles / 3600 steps
- This walk should take around 20-25 minutes
- A-Z Street Atlas, Page 152, Grid ref. F3

Please Note. At point 6 you will have to cross on to the right hand side of Mersey Road as there is no path initially on the left.

