



Sonya Brennan

Andrew Stuck is intrigued by Nordic Walking, not least as it is rapidly growing in popularity. Some of the questions that come to mind include: what attracts people to go for a walk using poles, what advantage do the poles bring, what health benefits does it accrue, and doesn't one feel a tad self-conscious? Andrew joined a Nordic Walking training session in nearby Lewisham with other novices under the tuition of **Sonya Brennan**. Andrew asked Sonya to tell her story of how she came to taking up Nordic Walking, and in the interview that you are about to hear, she answers my questions as well as candidly revealing her motivations. 19'54" 9.3MB

Notes from the podcast interview by **Andrew Stuck**: Recorded in April 2018 on a walk in Manor House Gardens, Manor Park and the surrounding streets in Lewisham. Published in July 2018 on <http://www.talkingwalking.net>

Join one of Sonya's introductory sessions to Nordic walking in Manor House Gardens <https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/openspaces/parks/Pages/manor-house-gardens.aspx>, in Lewisham in south east London on Thursdays - they are open to anyone older than 18 who is able to walk and are free to attend. You will be lent poles and asked to complete a simple health questionnaire. Just e mail Sonya: [sonya.nordicwalking \[at\] gmail.com](mailto:sonya.nordicwalking[at]gmail.com)

Originally funded through the NHS, it is now managed by the GCDA who maintain a useful website about Lewisham Nordic Walking: <https://gcda.coop/lewisham-nordic-walking/>

Don't live near Lewisham? You maybe able to check with your local authority to establish whether there are classes close by or through the Walking for Health website where you will find details of other walking opportunities by area. <https://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/>

Sonya undertook Learn2 training and is an accredited instructor with Nordic Walking UK: <https://nordicwalking.co.uk>. Nordic Walking training is also offered by <https://britishnordicwalking.org.uk/>

If you are already a Nordic walker you can join a number of different walks with Sonya or her team of volunteer leaders - she mentioned a long walk to and from Ladywell Fields <https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/openspaces/parks/Pages/ladywell-fields.aspx> to Beckenham Place Park <https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/openspaces/parks/beckenham-place-park/Pages/default.aspx>

Nordic poles differ from trekking poles as they have gloved harnesses. They can be purchased form around £20 a pair, and Sonya uses top of the range Leki poles that were more than £80 a pair. <https://www.leki.com/uk/product-area/nordic-walking/>

Sonya lost mobility in her left knee having twisted it, consequently was restricted in getting about and gained weight. She underwent a Health Check in 2013 that was the key motivator to start exercising and reforming her diet - more details about Health Checks can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-health-check/what-is-an-nhs-health-check-new/>

Apart from Nordic Walking, Sonya has also got hooked on aqua-aerobics and bootcamps - both maybe offered by your local leisure centre. You can read her story about her success in losing weight here: https://nordicwalking.co.uk/?page=see_effect&c=32

Sonya assists Laura Kinnunen <https://brockleynordicwalking.com/about-2/> on a Saturday introductory class in Ladywell Fields, and Sonya's brother Russell Ockwell is also a Nordic walking trainer. Silverfit also offer Nordic walking classes <http://www.silverfit.org.uk/>

Sonya's recommendation for a Nordic walk: Go out into the countryside