



# URBAN POLING Nordic Walking

## Instructor Certificate Course Manual

CEC approved by:



Saskatchewan  
Parks and Recreation  
Association



# Instructor

for trainers & fitness professionals



**Mandy Shintani (Vancouver)**  
mandy@urbanpoling.com

info@urbanpoling.com  
www.urbanpoling.com

**Distribution available in Canada,  
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Please contact us, or your course instructor,  
if you have questions, feedback, photos or  
stories to share. We love hearing from our  
4,000+ instructors!



**Diana Oliver (Toronto)**  
diana@urbanpoling.com

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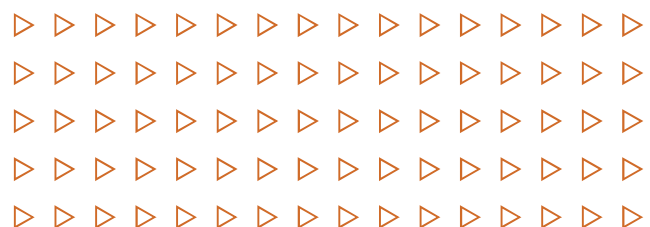
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**Ethical & Safe Professional Guidelines – Read and Agreed to Before Starting this Course:**

It is imperative that you work within your own professional scope as set by the guidelines determined by your college or association. If you are uncertain about your ability to work with a client given his or her physical, cognitive or psychological limitations, contact your association or college to discuss how you should proceed or refer this client to a physical therapist or physician to assess. As well, make sure you are aware of the contraindications for participation in group programs and for independent use of the poles. Abiding by these guidelines will ensure each person receives safe and ethical services.



# About Urban Poling Inc.

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Vancouver-based Urban Poling Inc. is owned by Mandy Shintani and Diana Oliver. Mandy, an occupational therapist, focuses on the education, innovation and international partnership aspects of the company. Diana, a marketing specialist, handles the company's marketing, project management and strategic planning.

Urban Poling sells its poles and accessories to Urban Poling instructors, retail stores, community centers, seniors' residences, hospitals and fitness clubs. These organizations have all discovered that Urban Poling poles combined with the Urban Poling Nordic walking technique provides the safest and most effective Nordic walking workout on the market.

Urban Poling has also developed the patented ACTIVATOR®, a pole designed specifically for older adults and rehabilitation purposes.

Urban Poling certifies instructors to teach Urban Poling and ACTIVATOR group exercise classes, provides product knowledge sessions for retailers, and presents educational sessions at schools, hospitals and conferences across the country. Urban Poling has emerged as the leader in the promotion of Nordic walking and training of fitness and health professionals internationally.



**Mandy Shintani**, co-owner of Urban Poling Inc., is one of the world's leading experts on the health benefits of Nordic walking. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in occupational therapy and a master's degree in gerontology. Mandy has 30 years' experience as an occupational therapist/rehabilitation consultant in hospitals and the community and was a director of six private clinics. She is a former finalist for the YWCA Women of Distinction Awards in the category of Entrepreneurship and Innovation.



**Diana Oliver** is co-owner of Urban Poling Inc. Prior to joining Urban Poling, Diana owned a fitness and wellness business teaching Pilates and Urban Poling. She also has extensive experience in the consumer-packaged goods industry for Unilever and AC Nielsen. Diana brings expertise in marketing and sales.



**Barb Gormley** is a personal trainer, health and fitness writer and an Urban Poling master trainer. As Urban Poling's director of education, she produces the company's educational materials. Barb has written numerous magazine articles on the benefits of Urban Poling and often represents the company at conferences and media events.



# Mandy's Story: "How I Got Hooked on Poles"

By Mandy Shintani

After having my second child and hitting my forties, I was determined to get back into shape. Like most of my friends, I promised myself that I'd jog when time permitted.

The truth is that while I was able to muster up enough interest to jog, it only lasted for a few weeks. Okay—a few days! I don't think the high-impact aspect of the sport made it a good long-term option for me.

So I started looking for a better, more efficient and more interesting way to keep in shape.

## **The Swedish connection**

In 2003, my Swedish neighbor Erin and I had an exchange that would change my life.

I asked her why the Swedes were so fit. Erin told me about their culture of walking versus driving and about Nordic walking, a sport that was incredibly popular in her home country. According to Erin, its mass appeal was due to its simplicity and suitability for people of all ages and fitness levels.

I was skeptical. Cross-country skiing without the skis? I wasn't too sure. Was this just another gimmicky piece of exercise equipment?

But Swedes aren't known for their lack of ingenuity, and I wasn't going to back out just because it was different. So off we went on my first Nordic walking workout.

Wow – I immediately noticed the difference between walking without poles and walking with them. I could really feel the difference in my upper body. I felt the biggest impact in my arms and, more importantly, in my core muscles. I felt stronger, taller and healthier! And it was so easy to learn.

It was encouraging to find an activity that gave me a challenging total-body workout that didn't leave me sweating profusely or short of breath. I remember Nordic walking down my street that first week and thinking, "Finally, a sport that doesn't make feel like I'm abusing my body or working beyond my physical limits."

## **Starting the company**

I quickly realized that introducing poling to Canada would be a tremendous way to get people moving.

With my background as an occupational therapist and some research completed (Nordic walking was part of my master's degree in gerontology), I felt ready to launch poling in Canada.

Over the years, my instincts have been proven right – people are passionate about Urban Poling!

*Mandy Shintani is an occupational therapist and co-owner of Urban Poling Inc.*

# History

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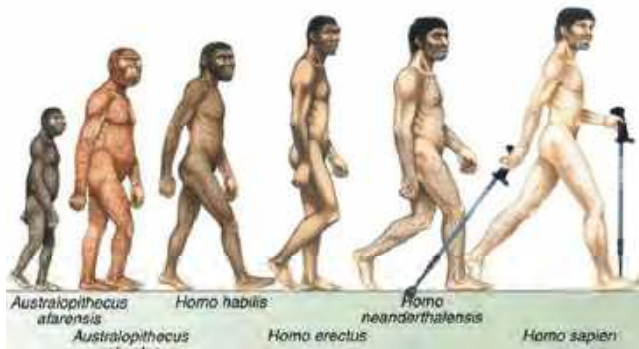
## What is Urban Poling®?

Urban poling combines an upper body technique similar to cross country skiing with the lower body technique of regular walking. *The terms “Nordic walking” and “urban poling” are interchangeable.*

## What is Urban Poling Inc.?

Urban Poling Inc. is the name of our company and how we have branded our poles and walking technique.

## The History



1. 1960/70 —“pole walking,” was developed as a summer training method for the Finnish cross-country skiing and winter biathlon teams.
2. 2000 — Nordic walking becomes extremely popular in the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland and Germany.
3. There are approximately 10 million people worldwide who regularly Nordic walk. It is quickly spreading throughout Europe and North America.

# 10 Benefits of Urban Poling

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1. Full-body workout
2. Improves core strength – e.g., with excellent technique, 5,000 steps per hour produces 5,000 ab contractions and 2,500 latissimus dorsi contracts (per side)
3. Burns more calories — Burns 20-46 percent more calories than standard walking.
4. Reduces impact to knees & hips – Significantly reduces ground reaction forces.
5. Improves balance
6. Reduces pain & increases flexibility
7. Improves posture
8. Improves mood – According to studies on depression.
9. Increases motivation – Research indicates participants walk more frequently and for longer distances.
10. Effective for helping to manage diabetes, cardiac rehab, a variety of injuries, chronic pain, obesity, breast cancer, etc.

For a Summary of Research, see Appendix G. For the most current research, visit [www.urbanpoling.com](http://www.urbanpoling.com) and look for Research.

# Who is Appropriate for Urban Poling?

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Follow your profession's guidelines to be sure you are working within your scope of practice. Participants with chronic conditions should discuss using Nordic walking poles with their healthcare professionals.

## Urban Poling is ideal for:

1. people interested in a convenient, lower-impact activity
2. avid walkers looking for something different and/or a full-body workout
3. walkers who don't enjoy or don't have time for traditional upper body resistance training
4. weight loss programs
5. people who cross train
6. winter programs, including winter walking and snowshoeing
7. training for 5km, 10km and marathon walking events
8. pre/post-natal fitness
9. boot camps
10. training for a hiking travel tour
11. employee wellness programs
12. school programs
13. active older adults
14. retirement associations





# Urban Poles



## CoreGrip (patented)

Excellence in Performance



**Palm** – Provides an effective alternative hand position to reduce grip fatigue, for off-loading weight when descending, and for propelling during long distance trekking. Large R and L identify the right and left handles.

**Column** – The ergonomic design allows for a loose grip, and the texture helps sweaty hands to grip.

**Flare** – Absorbs vibrations.

**Ledge** – Allows more-even distribution of weight across the outside edge of the hand. Allows for comfortable and effective application of force for core strengthening and off-loading of weight. Supports the wrist in a neutral position.



## Boot Tips & Carbide Tips

The boot tips have robust treads, shock absorption capabilities and a wide curved bottom for a smooth transition to propel you forward. The carbide tips provide excellent traction for snow, sand and trails..



## Ergonomic Evaluation



“The forces on the hand are more-evenly distributed across the heel of the hand in the CoreGrip handle design with higher forces at the wrist crease area improving the biomechanical advantage when walking. An even force distribution reduces uncomfortable contact stresses.”

Anna -Kristina Arnold, MSc, CPE (2016)

### Strapless Design

The strapless system was selected for safety; users are not constrained by or tied to their poles in the event of a fall. Hands are free to stabilize or break a fall.

A study conducted on the standard European Nordic walking pole suggests that Nordic walking is a very safe form of exercise. However, the most common form of injury occurs when users fall while they are strapped into their poles; they hold on until the very last moment before the hand hits the ground. Landing on the handle can force the thumb into abduction and extension. (Source: “Nordic Pole Walking Injuries,” K. Knobloch Sept. 20, 2006, U.S. National Library of Medicine).



Comments on the Urban Poles from Dr. Knobloch, 2014: “The Urban Poles appear light with a good grip. The hand design of the grip offers even more support and thus, provides safety. The hand piece and length adjustments are convenient. Overall, the chance to suffer a Nordic walking thumb is probably reduced with your Urban Poles, especially among patients with diabetes with a potential impairment of balance and proprioception.”

Prof. Dr. med. Karsten Knobloch

## Palm

Can be used in either a vertical or horizontal position to fit the size of your hand.

## Ferrule

The **ferrule** dampens vibrations as they travel up the pole reducing stress to the elbows and shoulders. It also provides a quiet operation. (**Note:** Poles with poor quality ferrules vibrate and rattle with each landing.) **When adjusting your poles, do not twist or touch the ferrule or you may damage it.**

## Telescoping Feature

The length of the poles can be adjusted to accommodate the height of each user, for easy transportation and storage, and to modify the height during other activities, such as snowshoeing, rollerblading and hiking.





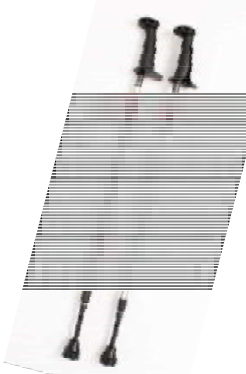
## Boot Tips

The shock-absorbing boot tips should be changed about every 10-12 months or when the tread appears worn and no longer provides traction. If the boot tips are wearing down faster than usual, the user may be landing the poles too aggressively or dragging them instead of planting them.

## Nordic Walking Pole Comparison

Urban Poling Brand Poles	Other Nordic Walking Poles
Strapless	Regarding wrist straps, a study by Knobloch (2006), found that walking poles are safe, but the greatest cause of injury is related to the strap.
Ergonomic CoreGrip  Weight bearing occurs on the Ledge of the handle with the wrist in a functional and neutral position with even force distribution which reduces stress to the wrist.	Most Nordic walking poles have a thin handle, and force is placed on the strap at the wrist.
Locking System  Highly-effective locking system with a weight bearing capacity of up to 90 lbs. per pole.  ACTIVATOR Poles have a button-lock system and an even higher weight bearing capacity of 200 lbs. per pole.	Poor-quality locking systems on poorly designed poles can cause the poles to collapse during use with weight bearing as low as 40 lbs. per pole.  Turning-lock system can be difficult for those with arthritic or repetitive strain injuries and for some older adults.
Boot tips  High quality rubber boot tips reduce vibrations and provide excellent traction.  The ACTIVATOR's bell-shaped tips provide additional stability and balance.	Beware of hard plastic, very small and low-quality rubber tips that wear quickly.
Vibration reduction  3 features (ergonomic CoreGrip, ferrule and boot tips) reduce vibrations.	Some poles have vibration reducing features and some do not.
Telescoping shaft  Allows for multiple users, can be lengthened for extended downhill walking, other activities and are easier for travel.	One-piece, fixed-length poles don't allow for use by multiple users and cannot be lengthened or shortened.

## Urban Poling Pole Specifications

Series 300	4LIFE	Spirit	Adventure	ACTIVATOR®
				
CoreGrip				
blue	hot pink	elk graphic	west coast motif	maroon
optional	optional	snow baskets	snow & trekking baskets	optional
internal twist locking system				button-lock system
				higher weight-bearing capacity
boot tips	pink 4Life boots	boot tips	boot tips	bell-shaped tips
3 anti-vibration features (CoreGrip, ferrule, boot tips)				
carbide steel tip				
2-section	2-section	2-section	3-section	2-section
31" collapsed	31" collapsed	31" collapsed	25" collapsed	29" collapsed
fits heights 4' – 6'2"				fits heights 4' – 6'
max weight of user: 250 lb.				max weight of user: 300 lb.
	portion of proceeds to breast cancer wellness programs	portion of proceeds to Canadian Diabetes Assoc. & National Aboriginal Diabetes Association		<b>New: ACTIVATOR2 Poles for clients up to 6'4" and COLLAPSE shorter for travel</b>

For more details about our poles and to see new products, visit [www.urbanpoling.com](http://www.urbanpoling.com).



## Accessories

	<p><b>Replacement Boot Tips</b></p> <p>Flex on contact for a soft landing. Fit both Urban Poles and ACTIVATOR Poles.</p> <p>* Replace when treads wear or every 10 -12 months.</p>
	<p><b>Replacement Bell Tips</b></p> <p>Flat base for stability and anti-vibration. For use with the ACTIVATOR technique; fits both ACTIVATOR and Urban Poles.</p> <p>* Replace when treads wear or every year.</p>
	<p><b>Replacement Pink 4Life Boots</b></p> <p>A perfect complement to the 4Life poles but fits all Urban Poles and ACTIVATOR Poles.</p> <p>* Replace when treads wear or every 10 -12 months.</p>
	<p><b>Carrying bag</b></p> <p>Protects your poles in storage and in transit, and makes carrying poles easier. Adjustable shoulder strap.</p>
	<p><b>Snow baskets</b></p> <p>Keeps poles on top of the snow while snowshoeing and skiing. Standard with Adventure poles. Fits both Urban &amp; ACTIVATOR Poles.</p>
	<p><b>Trekking baskets</b></p> <p>Upgrade your poles for hiking. Keeps your poles from sinking into loose rocks and deep mud. Standard on the Adventure Series. Fits both Urban and ACTIVATOR Poles.</p>
	<p><b>Storage Bag</b></p> <p>Stores up to 20 pairs of poles and has an embroidered Urban Poling logo.</p>

## Adjusting Your Poles



1. Position the pole horizontally. Place one hand on the handle end and one hand near the bottom of the pole. Pull out the bottom section of the pole. If the pole doesn't lengthen, unlock the bottom section according to the "lock/unlock" arrows at the bottom of the pole.

2. **Keep your hands off of the ferrule! It is carefully designed and sized to absorb vibrations and dampen noise. Trying to turn it could damage your pole!**



3. Lengthen the pole until you see heights printed on the lower portion. If you are a beginner, adjust the poles to 2 inches less than your height (for example, if you are 5'4", set the poles at 5'2").

After a few poling sessions, try lengthening the poles to your full height. Use whichever pole length feels most comfortable for you (2 inches below your height or your full height).



4. To tighten the pole, lock the pole in place according to the "lock/unlock" arrows at the bottom of the pole. (If you have mistakenly turned it in the wrong direction, it will take many rotations to lock it. Be patient!)
5. Position the boot tips so that, when you hold the handles, the boot tips point backwards. (It should look like the boots are walking in the opposite direction that you will be walking.)
6. Tighten your poles each time before using them.

**Important:** The Adventure poles have *two* ferrules/locking systems on each pole which must each be secured before use. (Only available in Canada and Australia.)

**Important:** The most common user error with the Adventure poles is when users secure only one ferrule/locking system and one section of the poles is lengthened beyond the Stop/Max line in an effort to make the poles long enough. This places too much stress on the pole and can easily snap the locking system!

## Important Tips

### Cold weather warning!

When using your poles in temperatures below 0° C /32 °F, place them outdoors for 10-15 minutes so they can adjust to the temperature. Then lock them at the desired height. If this isn't done, as the poles adjust to the temperature, the metal sections of the poles may shrink and the poles may loosen.

### Help, my poles are stuck!

The poles have an excellent locking system, but new poles may be a little challenging to unlock the first time. Try this: flip the pole upside down, and secure the handle between your feet. Then, using two hands turn the bottom section sharply in the direction of the “unlock” arrow.



Alternatively, have one person hold onto the top section of the pole as the second person turns the bottom section in the direction of the “unlock” arrow. A non-slip cloth or rubber gloves may help create a more secure grip.

# Urban Poling Nordic Walking Technique

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## Pre-class pointers

1. Hold your poles with an **“easy” grip**. Wrap your fingers all the way around the handles, but don’t grip them tightly.
2. Keep your **arms straight**; let them swing at your sides like two long pendulums.
3. Keep the **boot tips behind you** at all times. (If you look down as you’re walking, you shouldn’t be able to see them.)
4. Lift your **ribcage up** and away from your lower body to engage the abdominal and core muscles. Relax your shoulders.

Tip: Create an acronym to help yourself remember these four pointers. For example: **GST** (grip, straight arms, boot tips....)

**Step 1** - Hold the centre of each pole so they’re parallel to the ground. Walk several steps, letting your arms as they would normally when walking. Notice that when your right arm swings forward, your left leg steps forward. Alternatively, put your poles aside and walk a short distance briskly, slightly exaggerating the arm swing.

**Step 2** – Hold your poles by the handles. (Be sure the Left and Right poles are in the appropriate hands and that the boot tips are pointing backwards; never place your thumb on top of the handle!) Repeat Step 1, and simply drag the poles on the ground behind you.

Start with just a small swing. (Some users find it complicated to drag and swing the poles. Have these people skip ahead to Step 3.) Be sure the arms are straight, the boot tips are behind you at all times and the ribcage is lifted.

**Step 3** – Continue dragging the poles, but now swing your front arm higher until it is in a “handshake” position. Simultaneously, lengthen your stride to match your larger arm swing. Let your hands return until they are beside your thighs or even slightly behind them.

What should naturally happen at this point is a very small lifting and lowering of the boot tips off the ground (versus dragging). Lift and plant the poles firmly but gently; don’t slam them into the ground!

**Step 4** – Press the outside edge of your hands onto the Ledge (still keeping the arms straight). Feel your upper body and core muscles contract and your body being propelled forward by the poles.

Remember that keeping your elbows as straight as possible (but not locked) results in greater core strengthening!

For video instructions, go to [www.urbanpoling.com](http://www.urbanpoling.com) and see “Getting Started.”

# Teaching Methods

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1. Handshake (“Swing your arms up as if you were giving a handshake.”)
2. Demonstration (“Watch me.”)
3. When participants lose the technique or rhythm, tell them to “keep walking, but drag your poles and keep your arms still at your sides.” Then, start teaching from Step 2.
4. Elbow push: To correct bent elbows, as the participant is walking, place two fingers on his/her elbow and gently push the arm forward (with the right amount of pressure, the elbow will extend) to the handshake position (then follow it back to the side of the thigh) a few times.
5. Marching to music (“Imagine you’re a soldier marching to music...left, right, 1, 2...”)
6. The “quick start” method (start with your right arm and left foot forward, then push off.)
7. To practise the straight arm technique: have participants stand still and swing their arms forward and backward like long pendulums (with or without poles).
8. To understand the connection between pressing on the Ledge and activating the core: Have participants hold one pole with a long straight arm in the handshake position and the boot tip angled back. Press the shoulder down and lift the ribcage up, then press the outside edge of the hand onto the Ledge. Use the other hand to touch the abs, lats and back muscles to feel these muscles contracting.
9. The train method: In pairs, the instructor (without poles) stands behind the participant and holds the participant’s poles (near the boot tips). Begin walking, with the instructor taking charge of moving the participant’s arms with the proper timing (the poles will be parallel to the ground).
10. After giving lots of instruction and feedback, give participants time to practice on their own without your input or feedback.

## Stretches

Every urban poling workout ideally starts with a simple 5-minute warm-up. A warm-up prepares your body for exercise, so approach it with an easy energy. Choose from the exercises in Appendix E.



## Advanced Techniques

1. **Going uphill:** Keep your poles more upright and in front of you. Lean forward slightly, and use the poles to push you up the hill. If necessary, bend your elbows, but remember to transition back to the straight arm technique at the top of the hill.
2. **Going downhill:** Keep your poles upright, in front and out to the sides slightly. Bend your knees and elbows, and slow down your momentum. For long descents, it may be helpful to lengthen the poles. For very steep slopes, it may be easier to hold onto the Palm. For less-steep slopes minimize pressure on the Ledge, or drag your poles behind you.
3. **Trails, gravel and sand:** Remove the boot tips, and use the carbide steel tips for additional traction and stability. For long distance trekking, try placing your hands on the Palm for variety and to create a longer push off.
4. **Rain:** Experiment by removing the boot tips in slippery conditions. Use the ACTIVATOR technique if conditions are slippery.



## Common Technique Errors

1. Walking with the right arm and right leg in unison.
2. Not keeping the arms straight.
3. Dragging the poles (once past the learning stage).
4. “Tip toeing” the poles (keeping the poles vertical in front of the body versus angled behind the body).
5. Gripping the handles tightly. (Participants may complain of sweaty palms or blisters.)
6. Taking two steps for every one arm swing.
7. Applying more resistance to the Ledge with the dominant hand. (Participants may complain of blisters or pain/fatigue in the dominant arm. The boot tip of the dominant arm may wear down more quickly.)

**Note:** Although perfect technique is ideal, as long as participants are enjoying themselves and feeling some success, instructors can be a little flexible. Otherwise, participants may feel discouraged and lose interest.

## Winter Walking and Snowshoeing

1. Remove the boot tips for snowy conditions; use the snow baskets for snowshoeing and deep-snow winter walking. Change to the ACTIVATOR technique for greater stability. Poling in icy or slippery conditions is never recommended!
2. For tips on adjusting your poles for walking in snow and winter walking, watch “Getting Started” at [www.urbanpoling.com](http://www.urbanpoling.com).
3. Be very familiar with all walking routes. If you are heading into the woods, stay on the main trail. Be sure that your route matches your participants’ abilities, or require pre-requisites for participation (e.g., be able to walk comfortably for 40 minutes). Ensure everyone is dressed appropriately for the weather with proper footwear and has a knapsack for adding or deleting layers. Wear a knapsack with an extra hat, gloves and clothing, a first aid kit, water, food and a cell phone.

# Patented ACTIVATOR Rehab Poles

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ACTIVATOR Poles are ideal for adults with poor balance and stability. The poles were designed in consultation with occupational therapists and physiotherapists who work with older adults, individuals with chronic conditions and rehabilitation patients.

To use the ACTIVATOR Poles one-on-one or in a small group setting, you are ideally a physiotherapist, occupational therapist or a fitness professional with older adult fitness credentials and experience.

*\*Ensure you are working within your professional scope of practice as determined by your college or association.*

People with arthritis (or who have difficulty twisting Urban Poling's standard locking system) and people with generalized hip, knee or ankle pain are often more comfortable and safer using the ACTIVATOR Poles that have a button-lock system.



## Individuals who may benefit from using the ACTIVATOR poles

1. Post-hip and -knee surgery patients and people with lower body injuries (past the acute stage). Note: Urban Poling poles are not meant for full weight-bearing.
2. People in mild to moderate stages of certain neurological conditions (e.g., Parkinson's disease, MS, stroke, etc.).
3. Less-active/ inactive adults and people with stability and balance issues.

## Unique features of the ACTIVATOR poles

1. **The ergonomic CoreGrip**
2. **The button-lock system** is easier for weak hands and arthritic fingers (compared to the Urban Poling turning-lock system) and helps ensure that the poles remain securely locked in position.
3. **The bell-shaped tips** provide greater stability and allow for greater weight bearing than the traditional Nordic walking boot tip.

## Use the ACTIVATOR poles for participants with these issues

1. limited grip strength
2. obesity
3. poor balance
4. chronic conditions affecting balance and stability

## Tips for using the ACTIVATOR poles

1. Walk slowly when learning the technique.
2. Always use both poles.
3. Start by using the poles for only 1/3 of the client's maximum standard-walking time. Gradually increase the distance/time.
4. Use the bell-shaped tips indoors, on dry sidewalks and asphalt.
5. When using the poles on uneven terrain (such as on dirt trails, grass, sand or gravel) or in the rain or snow, remove the bell-shaped tip to expose the carbide steel tip. The carbide steel tip provides increased traction and stability in such conditions.  
**Note:** The carbide steel tips are very sharp. Use extreme caution to avoid injuring yourself or others. Never use the carbide steel tips indoors.
6. Use ACTIVATOR Poles on stairs only with instruction from a healthcare professional.

For more information and to view a video on the ACTIVATOR walking technique, visit [www.urbanpoling.com](http://www.urbanpoling.com). Therapists can register for the ACTIVATOR training course on the website or contact us directly for more detailed information on proper poling technique.

## Precautions

- Users should consult their physician or therapist before using the poles if they currently use a cane or walker, have any medical condition which affects their balance, stability, grip strength, vision, depth judgment or co-ordination, or if they are currently recovering from injury or surgery.
- ACTIVATOR poles can be used on stairs with instruction from a healthcare professional.
- ACTIVATOR poles should not be used in icy or slippery conditions.
- ACTIVATOR poles may help break a fall but falling on them may affect pole integrity. Do not use poles that have been involved in a fall or that have been damaged in any way.
- Limited warranty for one year.
- The ACTIVATOR technique and poles provide more stability and balance compared to other styles of walking poles.

# ACTIVATOR Technique

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**Step 1** - Place the Right and Left poles in the right and left hands.

**Step 2** - Stand tall with your poles, placing your elbows at your sides and at a 90-degree angle. Ensure the poles are always completely upright. Keep your elbows bent the entire time you are walking.

**Step 3** - Step forward with the poles and walk in the same manner as regular walking: swing your right arm forward (with your elbow bent at 90 degrees) as your left foot steps forward. Keep the poles in front of the body at all times. *Be sure that your upper arms swing forward and backward from the shoulders (not elbows) like pendulums.*

**Step 4** - Don't grip the handles too tightly. Instead, press down on the Ledge to intensify the workout and to increase your stability and balance. Significant off-loading of weight into the poles will only occur if you are applying a downward force to the Ledge.



bell shaped tip

**Carbide Tip** – Remove the bell-shaped tips and expose the carbide tip for better traction in the snow and sand or on rough terrain. Snow baskets can also help with balance by preventing the poles from sinking into snow and sand.

For video instructions, see “Getting Started” at [www.urbanpoling.com](http://www.urbanpoling.com).

**ACTIVATOR Course for Rehabilitation and Wellness Professionals** — This course provides in-depth training on the ACTIVATOR technique for one-to-one treatment sessions and group exercise programs for individuals with chronic conditions that affect balance, for post-surgery clients and less-active/inactive older adults.



# Small Groups & One-to-One Participants

## Contraindications

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Assess clients to determine their appropriateness for small group (2 to 5 persons) or one-to-one sessions.

Clients with the following conditions (with the possible exception of cardiac rehab clients) should be using only the ACTIVATOR poles and technique:

1. chronic conditions in early onset stages resulting in mild balance and coordination issues (e.g., MS, Parkinson's, etc.)
2. balance and gait difficulties
3. recently recovered from lower body injuries
4. cognitive limitations effecting judgment and insight
5. visual limitations
6. cardiac rehab

Note: Consult with the individual's physician or rehab professional.

Clients with the following conditions are *not* appropriate for group programs but may be appropriate for one-to-one sessions:

1. acute stages of frozen shoulder and tennis elbow
2. early stages of hip and knee replacements (a walker or crutches may be more appropriate; walking poles are not designed for moderate to maximum weight-bearing)
3. severe rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis in the finger joints affecting ability to grip the handles
4. severe acute cardiopulmonary conditions
5. chronic conditions in middle- to late-onset stages resulting in moderate to severe balance and coordination problems (e.g., MS, Parkinson's, etc.)
6. visual neglect caused by strokes
7. people who use walkers or two canes should only use walking poles under the direction of a physiotherapist, occupational therapist or trained rehabilitation personnel

**Note:** Consult with the individual's physician or rehab professional. If these clients are assessed and determined to be suitable for walking with poles, they should only use the ACTIVATOR Poles and technique. Work within your scope of practice. If appropriate for one-to-one, recommend a rehab professional.

# Starting a Series of Classes for Active Clients

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Use these suggestions to help create a proposal:

## **Suitability of Program**

Urban poling is suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels. However, participants should be able to walk comfortably (without poles) for 45 minutes. Participants should complete a physical activity readiness questionnaire (in Canada: visit [www.csep.ca](http://www.csep.ca) for the Get Active Questionnaire) upon registration and prior to the start of the program. These forms should be given to the instructor prior to the start of the course.

## **Waivers**

The Urban Poling clinic takes place outdoors and therefore participants should sign an outdoor waiver (see Appendix A). Participants are responsible for completing the waiver; these forms should be kept on file.

## **Location of Walks**

Participants should meet at the designated area at least five minutes before the start of the session to ensure a timely start. The route can be changed each week; providing a map and route information is suggested. This gives participants a chance to walk the route on their own at other times during the week.

## **Walking Themes**

Use your imagination to come up with walking themes. Here are some ideas:

- a) Garden walks: Walk to a new garden each week.
- b) Coffee shop or tea gatherings: Pick a coffee or tea shop at which to end your walks; take time to socialize afterwards.
- c) Walk-and-talk book club: Pick a book and discuss it as you walk.

## **Length of Walks**

The length of each walk is typically 30 to 75 minutes. Approximately 15 minutes of this time can be spent on warm-up, cool-down stretching and education.

## **Instructor(s)**

The recommended ratio is one instructor for every 10 participants. This may change depending on the group's fitness level and other factors. More instructors will be necessary if the group is less-active older adults. Classes can be increased to 15-20 people when instructors are experienced and when participants are healthy and active.

## **Test Session**

At the first class, test the abilities of your participants.

There are several options if your class has individuals who have difficulty keeping up with the rest of the group:

1. See if the individual can spend time between classes improving his/her fitness level.
2. Keep the route in a circle format so group members don't get too far apart from each other.
3. Ask if the more proficient polers can take turns walking with slower polers.

## **First Aid**

Instructors should carry a first aid kit, money for a taxi and a cell phone in case of emergency. They should also carry emergency contact information.

### **Safety Issues**

Ensure participants always walk in single file and with adequate space between themselves so that their poles don't create a tripping hazard.

### **Clothing**

Instructors should wear bright or reflective clothing during early morning and evening hours for high visibility when crossing streets.

### **Water**

Always carry more water than you would for regular walking.

### **Weather**

You may decide to run the program rain or shine. (Keep in mind that many people will not want to walk in the rain because of the slippery surface.) You could make this decision based on your group and simply ask them if they prefer to walk only in good weather. Be prepared to have a cut-off date for the program regardless of the weather, or your six-week program could turn into 10 weeks.

### **Registration**

Encourage participants to register for an entire session to promote exercise adherence. You may want to offer a drop-in rate, but this will require you to be constantly teaching newcomers and spending less time with the more-experienced polers. Consider a second instructor for the new people, and separate the groups.

### **Poles**

Urban Poling instructors can purchase equipment at special pricing. Instructors are responsible for the equipment and for keeping inventory. Regularly check to ensure that your poles have not been damaged and that they are securely locked into place for participants at each class.

### **Grants**

These include New Horizons (national) and the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

### **Paying Instructors**

Charge/expect to be paid a rate similar to other group exercise instructors. When discussing teaching rates, consider the cost to you of supplying the poles (if you do this).

### **Cost for Participants**

The cost of the program will depend on several factors:

1. the instructor's teaching fee
2. number of expected participants
3. whether you will have pre-registration only or allow drop-ins
4. length of the program (**number of sessions**)

# Considerations for Older Adult Classes

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## Steps to Starting a Program for Older Adults

### 1. Assess the Suitability of Participants

Inactive people over 45 should seek the advice of their physician or exercise professional and should be asked to complete the assessment tool recommended by your professional association.

Determine safe guidelines for your group based on your experience and professional background (e.g., must be able to walk continuously for 30 minutes and do not require a mobility device).

### 2. Determine the Location of Walks

Hold approximately the first three sessions indoors. Depending on your participants' abilities, it may be best to hold all of your classes indoors. Only venture outside if your group's walking tolerance is high enough to safely complete the route, tolerate outdoor conditions (e.g., sun, rougher surfaces, wind, noise, etc.) and if you are completely familiar with their limitations and abilities. Alternatively, many seniors' centres and retirement homes have outdoor walking paths.

Exercising indoors makes it easier for instructors to determine each person's maximum walking tolerance and to provide one-on-one supervision and assistance. It also allows participants to sit if they are fatigued or need assistance and keeps the group together.

Choose flat, non-slippery surfaces. Carpet is ideal. Check the grip of the poles on non-carpeted indoor surfaces before leading a class on a new surface.

Stay indoors during slippery conditions, including snow and ice. Icy conditions are not safe for walking of any kind or for people of any age. Be sure your route does not include stairs.

Review safety issues and rules for keeping the group together prior to going outdoors for the first time.

### **3. Determine the Length of Walks**

The initial session should be 30% of the distance or time that group members typically walk *without poles*. (For example, if they normally walk 30 minutes without poles, plan on 10 minutes for their first walk with poles.) Consider the lowest level walking tolerance of the most-limited participants of your group, and start at 30 percent of their walking tolerance. Your first walk outside could be as short as one block or two minutes of walking depending on the grade of the sidewalk. Be sure there are places for rest breaks during the first walk outside.

The walk routes should be simple and, in a circle, or a figure-eight pattern to make it easy to maintain contact with participants. Increase the walking period of the group very gradually. Another option is to plan regular rest stations throughout the route where the group members can sit and rest. Avoid routes with stairs.

### **4. Determine the Number of Instructors**

If participants are moderately active, one instructor for every 5 to 10 participants is recommended. This will vary depending on the group's fitness level. Be prepared to have more instructors if the group is less active. One instructor for every 2 to 3 participants is recommended for new leaders.

### **5. Carry First Aid**

Instructor should carry a first aid kit, money for a taxi and a cell phone in case of emergency. They should also carry emergency contact information and other relevant medical information with them (check your employer's guidelines). Fitness professionals should also have current first aid and CPR training.

### **6. Wear Bright Clothing**

Instructors should wear bright or reflective clothing during early morning and evening hours for high visibility when crossing streets. Bright clothing also makes you more visible to participants.

### **7. Be Aware of Medical Conditions**

Follow guidelines under the CCAA manual for the Seniors Fitness Instructors Course for medications and side effects.



#### **8. Carry Water and Snacks**

Always carry more water and snacks than you would for regular walking (particularly if group members have diabetes).

#### **9. Watch the Weather**

You may decide to run the program rain or shine. (Keep in mind that many people will not want to walk in the rain because of the slippery surface.) You could make this decision based on your group and simply ask them if they prefer to walk only in good weather. Be prepared to have a cut-off date for the program, regardless of the weather, or your 6-week program could turn into 10 weeks.

#### **10. Check Everyone's Poles**

Always make sure that everyone's poles are securely locked before walking.

Poles may be helpful in preventing a fall, however, once a person has landed or put excessive weight onto the poles during a fall or stumble, this may affect the integrity of the poles. Do not use poles that participants have fallen on or that are damaged in any way.

#### **11. Take Care of Your Poles**

Keep a running inventory of your poles (for loan and for sale) and be sure the boot tips and bell-shaped tips on the poles you lend always have good treads.

## Planning an Exercise Program for Older Adults

The design, length and intensity of your exercise class will vary widely depending on the abilities of your participants.

### **Length of classes**

A typical older adults class is likely about 30 minutes; this time includes non-active activities such as giving instructions, answering questions, socializing, etc.

The first class, however, should include just a short amount of time walking with the poles. For the first session, plan for just 2-10 minutes of walking since participants will be unfamiliar with the poles. Ask participants who require supervision to wait in their chairs until you can monitor them.

### **Sitting and Standing Exercises**

Start each class with sitting and standing exercises so you can quickly assess your participants' current functional and physical abilities. Determine if they should only do the sitting exercises or just indoor (versus outdoor) walking. The sitting and standing exercises will also help improve balance and core strength which are key for safe poling. (See Appendix E for sample exercises.)

Your first few classes should focus on assessing the abilities of participants and helping them to become comfortable and familiar with the equipment and exercises. After this, the focus can move more toward conditioning and increasing exercise tolerance.

In general, classes should focus strongly on proper use of the ACTIVATOR walking poles, activation, enjoyment, building confidence and socialization before improving conditioning levels.

### **Think safety**

Ensure that participants always walk in single file and with adequate space between themselves to avoid creating tripping hazards with their poles.

Turning: Ensure that participants do not pivot or lift the poles to turn. Instead, have participants walk in a big circle that allows them to be continuously moving and using their poles.

Trips and falls: Reinforce the benefits of having a strapless handle (e.g., they can simply let go of the poles if they think they are going to fall or trip another client). Practice letting go of the handles.

Clients should sign a waiver form (see Appendix A) and complete a physical assessment form as recommended by your professional association. Seek the approval of the participants' physicians and physiotherapists if there are concerns with their ability to attend your outdoor walking group.

Contact Urban Poling at any time with clinical questions ([mandy@urbanpoling.com](mailto:mandy@urbanpoling.com)).

### **Progress cautiously**

Once participants are using the ACTIVATOR Poles safely and correctly, consider increasing walking distance, time or intensity of the class. You may want to gradually increase the exercise sessions by one or two minutes each week. Progression should be very slow.

## **Instructor Checklist for Older Adults Groups**

(prior to taking a group outdoors)

- ☐ Assess clients according to your program guidelines.
- ☐ Complete the PARQ (Physician approval if over 69 and inactive)
- ☐ Determine the maximum walking tolerance of your lowest level client. Start at 30 percent of that tolerance when walking outside.
- ☐ Observed clients for 2-5 indoor sessions and determined which participants are appropriate for outdoor walking.
- ☐ Waiver forms signed.
- ☐ Leader has mapped out a short route (1-2 blocks or 3-10 minutes depending on the limitations of the lowest level participant).
- ☐ Route is level with no grade and no stairs or slippery sections.
- ☐ Route has places to rest if required.
- ☐ Plan for fast and slow walkers in your group.
- ☐ Ratio of one leader for every 5 to 10 clients and 2-3 clients if participants are less active older adults.
- ☐ Weather conditions – no snow, rain or slippery conditions.
- ☐ Poles for each participant are adjusted to the proper height and securely locked.
- ☐ Participants using the correct Right and Left poles.
- ☐ Start with indoor sitting exercises to assess clients' present function.
- ☐ Ask participants if there is any reason, they should not be walking with the group today.
- ☐ Inform group to stay in single file on sidewalk.

## Additional Program Ideas

### Private Lessons

Some people prefer private lessons for various reasons: they are very deconditioned, are recovering from injuries or pain, lack confidence, etc.

### 2-Hour Clinics or Workshops

If Urban Poling is a fairly new concept in your area, people may be more open to a 2-hour beginner clinic rather than a series of classes. Once they discover the joys and benefits of poling through your clinic, they will likely be keen to register for a series of classes.

### Increasing the Workout Intensity

Most urban poling sessions tend to be 6-12 weeks. Keep your participants challenged (and coming back for more sessions) by gradually increasing the intensity, speed and/or distance walked. Here's how:

1. Increase the **speed** by pressing harder on the Ledge (this speeds up the arms which in turn speeds up the legs).
2. Include **hill climbing**.
3. Challenge participants to walk a regular route in **less time**.  
Include **double poling intervals**: Use the standard rhythm and technique, but swing both arms forward at the same time planting the boot tips under the handles. Then press down on the Ledge, keeping the arms straight, and walk through your poles. Feel your hands and arms extend past your thighs and behind the body.
4. Include **jogging**: Use the Urban Poling Nordic walking technique while jogging. (This technique is optional; not all instructors will want to teach this to their classes.)
5. Include **exercises (with poles) for core strengthening, flexibility and balance**. Be sure the exercises match your participants' abilities.

### Winter Programs

Be very familiar with the route you if you walk on wooded trails, and stay on the main trail. Be sure your route matches your participants' abilities or set pre-requisites for participation – e.g., able to walk comfortably for 40 minutes. Ensure everyone is dressed appropriately for the weather with proper footwear and has a knapsack for adding or deleting layers. As an instructor, wear a knapsack filled with an extra hat, pair of gloves, first aid kit, water, food and cell phone.

For more tips on adjusting your poles for in the snow and winter walking, watch the 3-part videos "Getting Started" at [www.urbanpoling.com](http://www.urbanpoling.com).

### How to Train for a 5K & 10K Event (Urban Poling online course)

Training for a local 5K or 10K is a great idea for 8- to 12-week class programs. These events are excellent motivators for participants training focused on conditioning and weight management. The Urban Poling online course designed by a Sun Run In-Training Clinic Leader, provides a detailed 10-week plan and tips for training to do a 5K or 10K. The program is based on interval training concept of gradually increasing pace and distance. To register for the course, go to [www.urbanpoling.com](http://www.urbanpoling.com) under Education

### Webinars

Check out our live and pre-recorded webinars on Active Living with Cancer and Urban Poling and Diabetes.

# Pricing and Marketing Your Classes

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## Determine the price of your classes

What you charge for your classes depends on many factors. If you're not sure what to charge, start by determining the cost of a typical group exercise class in your city or town. Then consider the following facts, and increase or decrease that amount:

1. Will you be supplying poles, will the class include poles, or will participants bring their own Urban Poles?
2. Consider the group demographics. (What will people be able to or willing to pay?)
3. Will a drop-in fee (for people unavailable for an entire session) encourage more people to participate or dissuade them from joining the full session?
4. Do the math. For example:
  - class 1: 10-week, 1.5 hour, 8 participants @ \$12 /person/class = \$960.00 or \$64/hr.
  - class 2: 10-week, 1.5 hour, 6 participants @ \$15 /person/class = \$900.00 or \$60/hr.
  - Also factor in drop-in fees (for example, \$10 per person) and private instruction (for example, \$40 per session).

## Marketing tips

1. Provide value by offering ongoing feedback, new walking routes, social interaction, and warm-up and cooldown exercises.
2. Offer classes year-round to maintain class interest and your business momentum.

## Important Sales Information

Urban Poles are high-quality walking poles that come with a limited one-year warranty and are excellent value. If you would like to offer your participants special pricing, consider a package promotion. For example:

- Offer a classes-and-poles package.
- Present participants with a \$10-\$20 off coupon on the purchase of a pair of poles from you.
- Run a 90-minute clinic and refund the price of the clinic if people buy a pair of poles.
- Provide a bonus such as a free carrying bag or replacement tips with a purchase of poles.

## Special offers

Urban Poling and participating retailers occasionally offer time-limited specials. These promotions often fit with a magazine promotion or retailer advertisement and increase traffic and sales to both the Urban Poling website and Urban Poling instructors. You are not obligated to match this special pricing. *Please respect Urban Poling's Suggested Retail prices.*

## Where to hold your special events and classes

-Start your classes in a somewhat high-traffic area. Let people see you and your group with your poles. Pique their interest.

-Walking trails and large parks are ideal locations. There are no stoplights or traffic to slow your pace or break-up large groups, and most people prefer to walk in nature rather than on streets. On city streets, choose routes with interesting architecture, beautiful shops, etc. Or choose a destination (e.g., a new restaurant, public sculpture or building).

-Beware of single-track trails in wooded areas where you may be unable to see your participants. Narrow trails also make it difficult for faster walkers to pass slower walkers.

# 10 Ways to Promote Your Classes

1. Create a business name, business cards, and email address and signature.
2. Buy a set of demo poles and a storage bag. See [Wholesale StartUP packages](#).
3. Advertise your business on [www.urbanpoling.com](http://www.urbanpoling.com) "Find a Class." Email your contact details to [admin@urbanpoling.com](mailto:admin@urbanpoling.com).
4. Take advantage of social media, such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, to create a business profile and display images of your classes.
5. Use one of Urban Poling's posters to advertise your classes on public bulletin boards in your neighbourhood. Choose a photo that matches the demographic you are targeting.
6. Kick off your business with free demo in a busy public park.
7. Do on-site demos with local community groups, such as walking groups, CARP, senior centres, libraries, school parent groups.
8. Use [Meetup.com](http://Meetup.com), ("Neighbours getting together to learn something, do something, share something..."), to offer an introductory class.
9. Learn about Urban Poling's [Walk@Work](#) program to promote workplace wellness to businesses in your community.
10. Contact the lifestyle editor of your local newspaper about Urban Poling and your new classes. Include high-quality digital photos of smiling, colourfully-dressed participants Nordic walking in a key location in your town or city.





# Sample Demonstration Outline

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Occasionally Urban Poling asks instructors to lead demonstrations at special events or to offer a PK (“product knowledge”) session for retailers. Here is a suggested outline:

**Introduce yourself briefly and thank participants for attending.**

## **What is urban poling?**

Urban poling (also called Nordic walking) is a combination of upper-body cross country skiing and lower body walking.

## **How I discovered urban poling and why I enjoy it.**

Tell your story here!

## **The research**

- 20-46% increase in caloric expenditure
- Uses 90% of the body’s muscles
- Studies show there’s less pressure on your lower extremity joints and that it improves posture and stability.
- Many people find they can walk longer and faster with poles and that they’re more motivated to keep to a walking program.

## **Why Urban Poling selected this design for its poles**

- Patented ergonomic CoreGrip handles allow for an easy/not tight grip (ideal for those with arthritis or who are at risk for injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome)
- shock absorption features reduce vibrations to the hand and wrists
- minimal vibration and quiet operation due to the boot tips and locking system
- greater core strengthening by placing resistance on the Ledge rather than gripping a slim handle
- strapless system is safest

## **Teach the technique**

- Teach a quick lesson

**Thank the group for attending.**

## **What to bring**

- poles (perhaps preset some at 5’3” and some at 5’6”)
- nametag for yourself
- business cards
- sales forms and pens
- a handout with your key points
- distribute an article and/or send a link to a podcast from the private instructor website

# Appendix A:

## Participant Agreement, Release and Assumption of Risk

In consideration of the services of *[your company name here]*, its agents, owners, officers, volunteers, participants, employees, and all other persons or entities acting in any capacity on its behalf, I hereby agree to release, indemnify, and discharge *[your company name here]*, on behalf of myself, my spouse, my children, my parents, my heirs, assigns, personal representative and estate as follows:

1. I acknowledge that urban poling entails known and unanticipated risks that could result in physical or emotional injury, paralysis, death, or damage to myself, to property, or to third parties. I understand that such risks simply cannot be eliminated without jeopardizing the essential qualities of the activity.

**The risks include, among other things:** the hazards of walking on uneven terrain; slips and falls; the forces of nature, including lightning and rapid weather changes; the risk of exposure to insect bites; the risk of cold including hypothermia; my own physical condition, and the physical exertion associated with this activity.

2. I expressly agree and promise to accept and assume all of the risks existing in this activity. My participation in this activity is purely voluntary, and I elect to participate in spite of the risks.
3. I hereby voluntarily release, forever discharge, and agree to indemnify and hold harmless *[your company name here]* from any and all claims, demands, or causes of action, which are in any way connected with my participation in this activity or my use of *[your company name here]* equipment or facilities, **including any such claims which allege negligent acts or omissions of *[your company name here]*.**
4. Should *[your company name here]* or anyone acting on its behalf, be required to incur attorney's fees and costs to enforce this agreement, I agree to indemnify and hold them harmless for all such fees and costs.
5. I certify that I have adequate insurance to cover any injury or damage I may cause or suffer while participating, or else I agree to bear the costs of such injury or damage myself. I further certify that I am willing to assume the risk of any medical or physical condition I may have.
6. In the event that I file a lawsuit against *[your company name here]*, I agree to do so solely in the province of \_\_\_\_\_, and I further agree that the substantive law of \_\_\_\_\_ shall apply in that action without regard to the conflict of law rules of that province. I agree that if any portion of this agreement is found to be void or unenforceable, the remaining document shall remain in full force and effect.

**By signing this document, I acknowledge that if anyone is hurt or property is damaged during my participation in this activity, I may be found by a court of law to have waived my right to maintain a lawsuit against *[your company name here]* on the basis of any claim from which I have released it herein.**

**I have had sufficient opportunity to read this entire document. I have read and understood it, and I agree to be bound by its terms.**

Signature of participant \_\_\_\_\_

Print name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B:

# Urban Poling Technique

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Urban poling is a fun and easy activity for people of all ages. As with any new pursuit, you need to master the proper technique to become proficient. Since we've all mastered regular walking, all that's left to learn is how to coordinate the poles with the leg movements. It's not uncommon for people to feel uncoordinated at first. But with a little practice, walking with poles will become second nature.

To begin, start without the poles. Take a few steps and notice that your right arm swings forward as your left foot steps forward. Now, exaggerate the arm movement slightly by swinging your arms a little higher as you step.

Once you have mastered this, pick up your poles. With a pole in each hand begin walking, and drag the poles behind you. Let your arms swing naturally with your arms moving in rhythm with your legs.

Now you are ready to start working with the poles and incorporating the 3 P's: Plant, Push, Propel.

1. **Plant:** As you swing your arm forward, plant the pole at a 45° angle. Keep your front arm straight.
2. **Push:** Now apply some pressure to the Ledge with the outside edge of your hand.
3. **Propel:** Push down, and feel yourself being propelled by your upper body.

Start slowly at first, and pay attention to your technique. If you become confused, stop and begin again. Remember, as with any new endeavor, practice makes perfect.

### Important technique points:

1. **Watch your posture.** The poles assist with maintaining proper posture, but you may find yourself leaning forward. Keep your spine erect, tummy tucked in, eyes forward, chin tucked in and shoulders relaxed.
2. **Relax your grip.** Keep your grip loose. Press on the Ledge only during the push phase.
3. **Watch your pace.** As you get used to the technique, you may find yourself walking so fast that your arms can't keep up. Only walk as fast as your arms can move.
4. **Plant with purpose.** Firmly plant your boot tips, but don't slam them into the ground. Slamming causes excess vibrations through the poles, and over the long term it may aggravate your joints.
5. **Don't "tip toe" the poles.** This happens when you keep the tips of the poles too far forward and plant on just the tips of the boot tips. Practise keeping the boot tips behind you and planting your poles at 45°.
6. **Be aware of uncoordinated arm and leg movements.** You may find yourself planting the left pole as the left leg steps forward. This can happen from over-thinking the movement. Stop and start again by dragging the poles and gradually easing into the proper technique.
7. **Have fun!** It's important to enjoy yourself. With practise the technique will fall into place and you will feel more confident and efficient

## Appendix C:

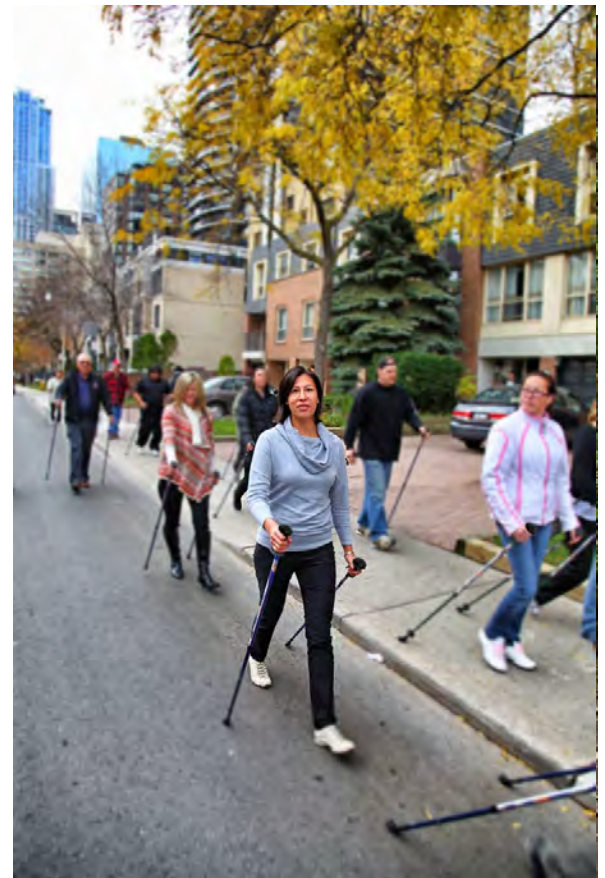


### 10 Reasons to Love Urban Poling

Urban poling (also known as Nordic walking)—think cross-country skiing without the skis—has toning, calorie-burning and posture benefits that have made it popular in Europe for decades. It's now becoming a workout favourite around the world!

Just grab your poles and go—no need for a pricey spandex outfit or a fancy gym membership! Here are 10 more reasons to try urban poling. Benefits may include;

1. **It whittles your waist**—Your abs tighten each time you push off with your poles. That's the equivalent of 1,000 abdominal contractions every kilometre or 1,800 each mile!
2. **Your knees and hips will thank you**—The poles let you offload weight from your hips and knees into your upper body. You can walk further, faster or even pain-free.
3. **It revs up the calorie burning**—Research proves it over and over again: urban poling burns up 20 to 46% more calories than standard walking. Wow!
4. **It sculpts your arms and shoulders**—Urban poling uses 90% of your muscles—especially those underused upper body muscles. Hello short sleeves!
5. **It helps balance your blood sugar**—The full-body urban poling workout helps keep blood sugars in a healthy range.
6. **You'll straighten up and feel more confident**—Your upper back muscles (the ones that pull your shoulders back) tighten each time you plant your poles and press down on the ergonomic handles.
7. **It's a fun social workout**—Invite your friends, your parents & your kids to enjoy all the health benefits with you.
8. **It's an amazing stress buster**—The smooth rhythmic action provides a distraction from everyday concerns and lifts your mood.
9. **You can adjust the intensity**—It's an energizing activity for people of any age and athletic ability. Just press on the ergonomic handles with more or less intensity to modify your pace.
10. **It's a great running alternative**—Hit the trails or your neighbourhood sidewalks on your own or with a gang of friends. Urban poling offers the same year-round fresh-air experience as running—but without jarring and jostling your joints.





## Appendix D: Urban Poling Instructor Insurance

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If you currently have liability insurance as a group exercise instructor or personal trainer, Urban Poling classes are typically considered a type of group exercise class and training format.

We strongly suggest you obtain insurance for your classes and for retailing the poles. Here are two suggestions for Canadian instructors.

1. Stevenson & Hunt	group insurance for canfitpro members	877-734-8776 <a href="http://www.sthunt.com/canfitpro">www.sthunt.com/canfitpro</a>
2. Hub International Ontario	The program is called Fitness Professionals Insurance program. The Urban Poling Instructor course (not the Urban Poling ACTIVATOR course) is eligible for this insurance.	416-597-0555



## WARM-UP

- Every urban poling workout ideally starts with a simple 5-minute warm-up. A warm-up prepares your body for exercise, so approach it with an easy energy.
- To create a warm-up, consider 3 or 4 of the exercises below. Repeat each exercise, moving smoothly and rhythmically, for about 30 seconds.
- When your poles are planted on the ground, press down on the Ledges for stability.

# WARM-UP EXERCISES



**Arm swings:** Swing your arms forward and backward, keeping the arms long and straight.



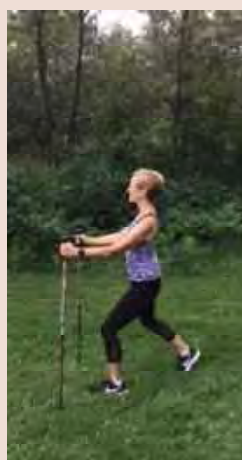
**Arm reach:** Reach your poles up on an angle. Keep the distance between your ears and arms consistent.



**Waist twists:** Swing your poles side to side releasing the back heel each time.



**Mini side lunges:** With your arms straight and feet apart, shift your weight side to side Option: lift the toes each time (pictured).



**Mini back lunges:** With your arms straight, step back with one foot and slightly bend both knees.





## STRENGTH

- Take time during or at the end of your poling workout to include 3 or 4 strength exercises.
- Perform each exercise for 30 – 60 seconds moving at a pace that is comfortable for you.
- When your poles are planted on the ground, press down on the Ledges for stability and to engage your core and upper body muscles.

# STRENGTH EXERCISES



**Jumping jacks:** Sit tall, and hop or step your feet and poles continuously out and in.



**Core:** Lean back and make a smooth kayaking/paddling motion side to side.



**Sit to stand:** Sit down, then stand up leading with the chest.



**Shin strengthener:** Gently rest the boot tips on your toes, and lift and lower toes.



**Calf raise:** Lift and lower your heels.



**Core:** Sit tall, then lean back keeping your back perfectly straight.



**Outer thighs:** Point your toes forward and lift and lower your leg several times each side.

## COOLDOWN

- Stretching helps you relax after a challenging urban poling workout and improves your flexibility.
- To create a cooldown, choose 3 or 4 of the exercises below.
- Hold each position for about 30 seconds.
- When your poles are planted on the ground, press down on the Ledges for stability

# COOLDOWN EXERCISES



**Full-body stretch:** Reach your hands forward, your hips back and your chest down.



**Back stretch:** Reaching your poles forward, bend your knees, and tuck your hips under and chin in.



**Neck stretch:** Reach your poles down as you tilt your head in the opposite direction.



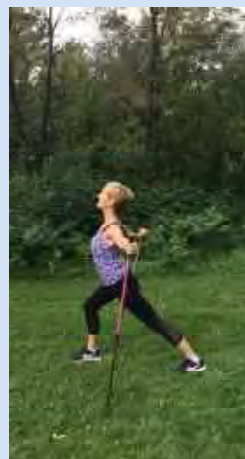
**Back thigh stretch:** With one foot elevated, reach your chest forward



**Front thigh stretch:** With shoelaces on a bench, press the hips forward.



**Calf stretch:** Lunge forward, and press the back heel down.



**Chest and shoulder stretch:** With poles at 3:00 and 9:00, lunge and press your chest forward.



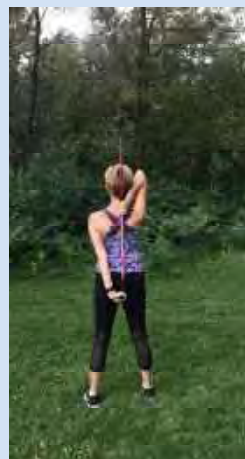
**Waist & shoulder stretch:** Reach up towards the corners of the room.



**Inner thigh stretch:** Shift your weight to the side lifting the toes.



**Hip stretch:** With poles at 10:00 & 2:00, cross one leg over & lower the hips.



**Back arm stretch:** Hold pole vertically behind your back; gently pull pole down.



**Chest & shoulder stretch:** Reach the poles up and lower them behind the shoulders.

# Appendix F: ACTIVATOR Exercises

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## Benefits of Using Poles for Stationary Exercises

- better posture and forward movement
- bilateral support
- use poles for visual and sensory cueing
- prepares clients for walking with poles
- increases shoulder ROM
- reduces impact from lower extremity joints
- new tool to increase adherence to exercise
- exercise program can be done anywhere in the home

## Sitting and Standing Exercises Using the ACTIVATOR Poles

Assessment: TUG, Berg

Targeting: knee flexion/extension, hip abductors, plantar flexion and dorsiflexion

### Progression:

- Start with sitting exercises.
- Start with 3 to 5x. Gradually increase reps and frequency.
- Use weights and resistance band to increase the intensity.

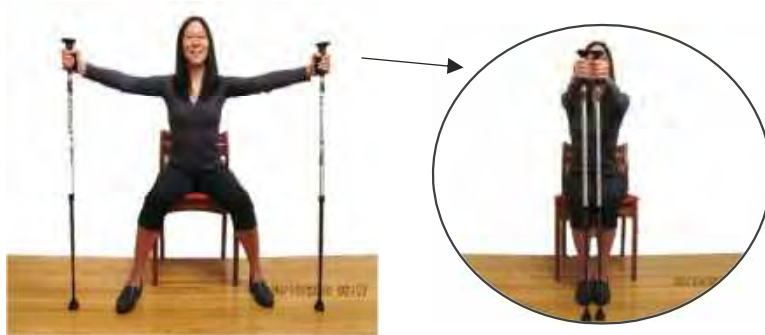
### Tips:

- Coach clients to sit upright with good posture.
- Continually remind clients to breathe.
- Use a solid chair and/or a chair against a wall.



## ACTIVATOR SITTING EXERCISES

**Jumping Jacks** - With your arms apart, place your feet apart, then place your poles together and your feet together.



**Reverse Jumping Jacks** - Plant the poles together and place your feet apart. Then place your feet together and place your poles apart.



**Lean Forward** - Arms straight, and hold onto the poles while leaning forward.



**Kick Forward** - Kick out slowly and straighten the knee. Repeat with other leg.



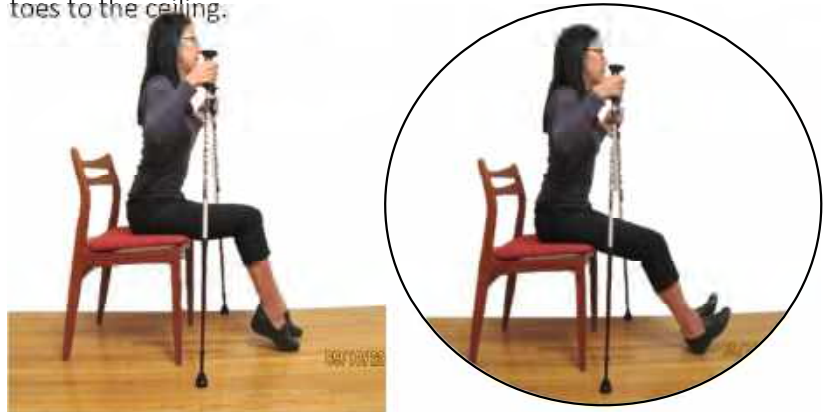
**Hip to Chest** - Bring the knee as close to the chest as possible. Repeat with other knee.



**Ankle Press** - Rest the heel on the ground and point your toes to the ceiling pressing the pole on top of your toes.



**Ankle Up & Toes Down** - Rest the heel on the ground and point the toes to the ceiling.



## ACTIVATOR SITTING EXERCISES

**Foot Circle & Shapes** - Lift and move the foot in a circle or square. Repeat with other foot.



**Leg to the Side** - Lift one leg and move to the side, then back together.



**Buttocks Lift** - With poles apart and leaning on them, lift the buttocks off the seat.



**Buttocks Forward** - Sit at the back of the chair. Lift and move the right buttock forward towards end of seat.



**Ankle Turns** - Lift and rotate one ankle in a circle. Repeat with other ankle.



**Neck and Arm Turn** - Turn the head to the side & lift the pole to the side. Then look behind and lift the pole behind you.



**Arm Strength** - Hold poles with both hands on top and raise to chest level. **Arm Lifts** - Lift as high as possible overhead.

**Graded Exercise** - Do the same exercises and use weights. Start with one lb. and gradually increase weights.



## ACTIVATOR STANDING EXERCISES



**Sit to Stand** - Sit on the chair and slowly move to a stand position.



**Standing Tolerance** – Stand holding onto both poles.



**Knee Lift** – Hold onto the poles, and lift one knee and then the other.



**Leg Side Lifts** - Lift one leg to the side and bring back together. Repeat with other leg.



**Marching** – Hold on the poles and march on the spot.



**Front to Back Weight Shifting** – Step one foot in front of the other and weight shift from one to the other. Reverse and repeat.



**Weight Shift Side to Side** – Keep legs apart and shift weight from side to side.



**On Your Toes** – Stand on the toes and rock back slow onto the heels.



**Lunge** – Step one foot forward and bend the knee.

## ACTIVATOR STANDING EXERCISES



**Leg Side Lifts** - Lift one leg to the side and bring back together. Repeat with other leg.



**Marching** – Hold onto the poles and march on the spot.

## PRE-GAIT EXERCISES



**Marching** – Hold onto the poles and march on the spot.



**Front to Back Weight Shifting** – Step one foot in front and weight shift front to back foot.



**Front to Back Side to Side** – With legs apart, shift weight side to side. Apply pressure on the Ledge opposite the weight-bearing leg.



**Knee & Arm Lift** – March on the spot, lifting one leg and the opposite arm at the same time.



**Leg Swing** – Swing one leg in front with other knee slightly bent. Then swing from behind to in front.



**Bend Knee & Push Back** – Bend one knee and move the leg behind you.



# Appendix G: Research Summary

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## Health Benefits of Nordic Walking: A Systematic Review (includes 41 studies) Tschentscher, 2013

### Caloric Expenditure

#### Field testing of physiological responses associated with Nordic Walking

Nordic Walking, examined in the field, results in a significant increase in oxygen use and caloric expenditure compared to regular walking, without significantly increasing perceived exertion. Church TS et al., 2002.

Effects of 12 Weeks of Walking or Exerstriding on Upper Body Strength and Endurance”.

The Cooper Institute of Dallas conducted a study which showed that caloric expenditure increased 20% when Nordic walking compared to regular walking. "Some individuals increased as much as 46% in oxygen consumption and just about the same in caloric expenditure" Church et al., 2002 The Cooper Institute, RQES, vol 73, No.3, pp. 296-300

### Cardiac

Randomized trial of Nordic walking in patients with moderate to severe heart failure.

A study published by the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, concluded that walking with poles is superior to standard cardiac rehab, even for those following mild to moderate heart failure. Keast et al., 2013

The influence of systematic pulse-limited physical exercise on the parameters of the cardiovascular system in patients over 65 years of age.

Systematic NW physical exercise limited by the pulse had a beneficial effect on the physical performance of elderly persons as assessed with main parameters. A short 6-week programme of endurance exercises had a hypotensive effect in elderly persons over 65 years of age. Chomiuk et al., 2013

### Diabetes

Effects of Nordic walking on cardiovascular risk factors in overweight individuals with type 2 diabetes, impaired or normal glucose tolerance.

Nordic walking improved anthropometric measurements and exercise capacity. However, unsupervised Nordic walking may not provide a sufficient increase in exercise intensity to achieve ultimate health-promoting benefits on the cardiovascular parameters assessed in this study, particularly for those with disturbed glucose regulation. Fritz et al., 2013

Physical activity in pregnancy and in breast-feeding period in obese mothers.

Considering common recommendations for training, as well as careful measures and contraindications, a moderate individual training to maintain physical and psychic fitness is desirable. Many kinds of sports like jogging, Nordic walking, swimming and cycling, for example, can be carried out in a pregnancy without any risks and furthermore promote the health of the future mother and child. Korsten-Reck et al, 2010

## Older Adults

Short-term and long-term effects of Nordic Walking training on balance, functional mobility, muscle strength and aerobic endurance among Hungarian community-living older people: a feasibility study.

Balance, functional mobility and aerobic endurance significantly improved in the Nordic walking group. This study showed that Nordic Walking is a simple, well-tolerated and effective physical activity for older people in Hungary.

Effects of Nordic walking compared to conventional walking and band-based resistance exercise on fitness in older adults.

While all modes of exercise improved various components of fitness, Nordic walking provided the best well-rounded benefits by improving upper-body strength, cardiovascular endurance, and flexibility. Therefore, Nordic walking is recommended as an effective and efficient mode of concurrent exercise to improve overall functional fitness in older adults. [Takeshima et al., 2013](#)

## Knee Joints

Changes in in vivo knee contact forces through gait modification

The results of this study suggest that an optimal configuration of bilateral hiking poles may significantly reduce both medial and lateral compartment knee forces in individuals with medial knee osteoarthritis. [Kinney et al., 2013](#)

Effects of Walking Technique on Knee Joint Loading

Dynamic knee joint loading is effected by the technique adopted. Increase in dynamic knee joint loading was observed when poles contact the ground behind the user. Decrease in dynamic knee joint loading was observed when poles are held away from the body and downward force was applied.

Bechard et al., 2015 (unpublished) UWO

Effects of Nordic walking and walking on spatiotemporal gait parameters and ground reaction force

Compared with the walking group, the Nordic walking group showed an increase in cadence, stride length, and step length, and a decrease in stride time, step time, and vertical ground reaction force.

[Park et al. 2015](#)

## Neck Pain

Health benefits of Nordic walking: a systematic review.

A study by Henkel et al. (2008) found effect of selected prevention concepts on functional health of persons with nonspecific chronic recurrent neck pain. Observed a reduced in unspecific, chronic neck pain and increased quality of life [Tschentscher et al., 2013](#)

## Back Pain

Supervised and non-supervised Nordic walking in the treatment of chronic low back pain a single blind randomized clinical trial.

For pain, disability, and patient specific function the supervised Nordic walking group generally faired best however no statistically significant differences were found. [Hartvigisen et al., 2010](#)

## **Fibromyalgia**

Does moderate-to-high intensity Nordic walking improve functional capacity and pain in fibromyalgia? A prospective randomized controlled trial.

Moderate-to-high intensity aerobic exercise by means of Nordic walking twice a week for 15 weeks was found to be a feasible mode of exercise, resulting in improved functional capacity and a decreased level of activity limitations. Pain severity did not change over time during the exercise period. [Mannerkorpi et al., 2010](#)

## **Mental Health**

Physical activity of depressed patients and their motivation to exercise: Nordic Walking in family practice. Nordic walking increased the patients' physical activity and improved their mood. [Suija et al., 2009](#)

## **Obesity & Menopause**

Effects of Nordic Walking and Pilates exercise programs on blood glucose and lipid profile in overweight and obese postmenopausal women in an experimental, nonrandomized, open-label, prospective controlled trial.

Exercise training in accordance with the NW model causes statistically and clinically more significant changes in glucose and basic blood lipid levels than do Pilates and dietary intervention alone. [Hagner-Derengowska et al., 2015](#)

## **Peripheral Arterial Disease**

Nordic poles immediately improve walking distance in patients with intermittent claudication.

These results show that Nordic Pole Walking (NPW) immediately enables patients with intermittent claudication to walk further with less pain, despite a higher workload. NPW might also be a useful exercise strategy for improving the cardiovascular fitness of patients with intermittent claudication. [Oakley et al., 2008](#)

## **Cancer**

Stick Together: A Nordic Walking group intervention for breast cancer survivors.

Patients' vitality had improved, whereas perceived shoulder symptom severity and limitations in daily activities had decreased. Goniometric data indicated that range of motion (forward flexion, abduction and external rotation) of the affected shoulder improved significantly within ten weeks of training. Results from this explorative study suggest that Nordic Walking is a feasible and potentially valuable tool in the rehabilitation of patients with breast cancer. [Fischer et al., 2015](#)

The effects of pole walking on arm lymphedema and cardiovascular fitness in women treated for breast cancer: a pilot and feasibility study.

The results indicated a significant reduction in total arm volume of the lymphedema arm, in lymphedema absolute volume and lymphedema relative volume. Significant decreases of heart rate and rating of tightness in the arm were found. [Jönsson & Johansson, 2014](#)

The effects of walking poles on shoulder function in breast cancer survivors.

The data suggest that using a walking pole exercise routine for 8 weeks significantly improved muscular endurance of the upper body. [Sprod et al., 2005](#)

# Appendix H: Practicum

## Part 1 – Mandatory Step

(CCAA, 3 AFLCA, 4 BCRPA, 2 canfitpro, 2 OFC, 4 SPRA, 4 MFC CECs)

Participate in the Urban Poling Instructor Course and complete the quiz in this manual. Your instructor will provide your certificate at your course or mail it to you shortly afterwards. Successful online participants receive their certificate immediately upon passing.

## Part 2 – Optional Step -The Practicum (strongly recommended)

(4 canfitpro CECs)

Complete 12 sessions of poling on your own and teach two or more individuals (in individual sessions) using the techniques and strategies learned in the course. Your certificate will be sent when you notify your course instructor that you have completed the requirements.

### Optional Step Tracking Forms (for your reference only)

#### Your Poling Sessions (12 sessions)

Session #	Date	Time	Total Time
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			

#### Your Teaching Sessions

##### Participant #1

Participant's name	Date	Techniques taught
		<input type="checkbox"/> the Urban Poling Nordic Walking Technique <input type="checkbox"/> double poling <input type="checkbox"/> walking uphill <input type="checkbox"/> walking downhill

##### Participant #2

Participant's name	Date	Techniques taught
		<input type="checkbox"/> the Urban Poling Nordic Walking Technique <input type="checkbox"/> double poling <input type="checkbox"/> walking uphill <input type="checkbox"/> walking downhill

# Appendix I: Additional Training

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Additional Urban Poling Courses – go to [www.urbanpoling.com](http://www.urbanpoling.com) or [urbanpoling.us](http://urbanpoling.us) under Education

## 1. Train for a 5K or 10K Event

This program, designed by the Vancouver Sun Run In-Training Clinic Leader, provides a detailed 10-week plan and tips for training. The program is based on interval training gradually increasing the pace and distance.

## 2. Power UP Conferences

Sessions include: Exercises Galore (Learn 30+ resistance training and cardiovascular exercises that incorporate your poles. Use the exercises to pump up the intensity, create an interval-style class or create a post-class stationary resistance training segment. Also covered: warm-up and cooldown ideas plus techniques for managing groups with diverse fitness levels), How to Promote Your Urban Poling Classes, and Weight Management.

CECs: 2 canfitpro. For information and registration, contact [info@urbanpoling.com](mailto:info@urbanpoling.com)

### Courses available in 2019/2020

- Urban Poling Cancer Wellness Course
- UP Your Game of Golf – Improving Strength & Flexibility
- Paddle UP – Dragon Boating – Improving Core Strength & Flexibility for Paddlers
- Diabetes Management with Urban Poling

# Appendix J: Ordering Urban Poling Equipment

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## Retail

If you prefer to send your clients to a retail store, there are hundreds of participating retail stores across Canada. Use Find A Retailer on the website to find a store in near you.

## Online

Poles and accessories can also be purchased online at [www.urbanpoling.com](http://www.urbanpoling.com) or [www.urbanpoling.us](http://www.urbanpoling.us). Also available on Amazon.com and Amazon.ca

## Wholesale

Canada - Order poles using the private instructor website (go to [www.urbanpoling.com](http://www.urbanpoling.com) and click on Members Login at the bottom left of the home page) or use this link: <http://urbanpoling.com/trainers/shop>.

Bookmark this page or add this link to your browser's Favourites list for easy access.

USA – contact us at [info@urbanpoling.com](mailto:info@urbanpoling.com)

UK, Australia and Ireland – go to [www.urbanpoling.com](http://www.urbanpoling.com) under Contact US for your local distributor.

Other countries – send an email to [orders@urbanpoling.com](mailto:orders@urbanpoling.com)

Volume discounts are available for instructors for orders of five or more pairs of poles for your classes or community.

Call in your order at 877-499-7999, fax your order form to 604-990-7715 or email it to [orders@urbanpoling.com](mailto:orders@urbanpoling.com).