



Net WALKING



Netwalking brings more movement into our working day

The way we live and work constantly changes, and so with remote working more common, the need to look after our physical and mental health by moving more as part of our daily lives becomes more important.

Netwalking, put simply, is a walking meeting between two or more people out in the open. Netwalking can bring plenty of benefits, such as; making new connections, strengthening relationships, improving mental health, improving physical health, stimulating creativity, increasing work satisfaction, normalising movement and getting fresh air to name a few.

The idea is being jointly promoted by Walk Derbyshire and Walk Notts. Netwalking enables more organic initial introductions, heightens creativity, enhances listening skills, builds relationships and encourages active behaviour. It offers face-to-face/ side by side contact in a safe, creative and open aired space.

It's an opportunity to leave our desks, explore, talk, walk, create, appreciate, connect and reflect.



Walk Notts has a big ambition, to inspire people in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to walk more often, particularly those who currently don't incorporate walking into their everyday lives. We want to transform the way people think and behave in relation to walking and help people find their own motivation to walk.



Walk Derbyshire aims to promote all walking opportunities across the County. Walk Derbyshire aims to create a culture of walking across Derbyshire and make everyday walking the norm. We provide information and support to all people across the County to get out and walk right from their doorstep.



A Netwalk is a great solution for

- Meeting with new contacts
- Team building
- Collaboration and cross organisational working
- Problem solving and idea generation

We want to ensure that this time remains valuable and doesn't impact your daily work duties, so to ensure a positive experience for all, overleaf we have put together a handy guide of tips.

“Netwalking’, ‘Walk and Talk’, whatever you want to call it, it amounts to the same thing, a great opportunity to explore, reconnect, relax, become more effective in our roles and most importantly - have fun!”

Jane Hicken, Healthy Workplaces Derbyshire

**“Netwalking - What a fantastic idea!
Much quicker than sending emails, and
much more enjoyable”**

Attendee



How to stage a Networkk



PLANNING

An average person walks around 3 to 4 miles per hour. For a 60 minute meeting you could plan to walk up to 3 miles, which is a comfortable pace for most people. The route could be in a city, in the countryside, or through a park. As the organiser, we recommend you test out the route prior to the event, or appoint a trained walk guide to handle this. You could use Google Maps, What3Words or a similar plotting tool to measure the distance first.

Choose a public landmark as a meeting point - such as a café, community centre or office with toilet facilities. We advise planning a circular route which returns to the place you started. You could book a more traditional meeting space upon return to discuss, reflect, capture and collaborate over a coffee and collectively review the day's findings.

Make sure you communicate to your guests beforehand to wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Ensure you take their contact details for use on the day, and advise everyone brings a mobile phone. Setting up a WhatsApp group the day before with all attendees works great as you can keep connected.

Depending on your invitees you may need to carry out a risk assessment - ask if anyone has any special requirements, or concerns to consider beforehand.

FACILITATING

There are many ways to facilitate a Networkk, depending on the size of the group, the primary objective, and the types of discussions you want to hold. Here are some tips for different ways to facilitate:

People management - it's very easy on a Networkk for people to talk to those they are most familiar with. As facilitator, try different group sizes, mixing these up often, and asking people to specifically speak to people they haven't spoken to before/ or on that day. There are benefits of walking in smaller groups of 2, 3 or 4 too, both in terms of physicality of this with narrow paths, and allowing a wider contribution, not just hearing the same voices. This allows people with different personality types to listen more, or process the conversations internally more effectively, rather than just contributing.

Time management - you can set pre-determined markers of time depending on the amount of attendees, akin to speed dating. five, ten or fifteen minute intervals work well for traditional networking.

Topic management - you can set an overarching theme, with specific questions and smaller topics for discussion. You could also set a traditional agenda, with updates or discussions managed from the agenda. For pure networking and initial introductions, a looser topic management with more facilitation mixing of people management would work well.

Skill enhancement - listening is a very undervalued and under practiced skill, and walking side by side is a brilliant way to enhance the conditions of developing this skill. You could set up a different space to normal interaction- by setting specific questions or topics of conversation. You could also set a time for one person to speak on a topic and let their thoughts flow, whilst the other listens only, and feeds back after, rather than naturally interjecting or steering the conversation. This gives more structure to a conversation if you really want to shape conversations, gather a consensus and ensure you are hearing from everyone equally.

EVALUATING

The brilliance of a Networkk is that many conversations can happen at once. The importance of this for a facilitator, is bringing this all back together. Having a space at the end to debrief, in order to reflect, capture and collaborate on the discussions further is key.

- This could be done immediately after, in an office space or coffee shop, with flipchart paper and sticky notes, asking key spokespeople to feed back to the group and develop the conversation further
- This could also be done through a reflective follow up - either written up or a follow up virtual meeting, or series of meetings
- If your Networkk had an overarching objective, it might also work well to begin turning thoughts into tangible actions, to leave with next steps and purpose
- It may also work well to agree and plan your next Networkk, to factor in any feedback.

5 Top Tips



Plan your route



Set an agenda



Invite people, gather contact details for the day

Wear comfy shoes, appropriate clothing and bring your phone



Factor in reflective time