

Restarting Ramblers activities


Leading group walks

Walk leaders plan and lead group walks, to discover new places and enjoy the outdoors together on foot. Over 60,000 Ramblers group walks take place every year!

Due to COVID-19 there are extra steps we need to take to organise and lead group walks safely.

This guide outlines the steps you must take when leading a Ramblers group walk.

Please check our guidance on [Restarting Ramblers activities](#) for the latest updates on **group size**, and **walker to walk leader ratio**.



Remember – in order to volunteer, your role needs to be recorded on our system. Check your volunteer roles:

<https://ramblers.goassemble.com>

1. Planning the walk

✔ Make the right decision for you

We know that COVID-19 has affected everyone in different ways. Before volunteering, everyone should **consider their personal circumstances**. There is no obligation to lead walks, now or ever!

Read our [Quick Guide to Restarting Ramblers Activities](#) for the key questions you should ask before volunteering.

✔ Speak to your group walk programme coordinator

Check the process you should follow to plan, advertise and limit numbers on your walk. We also have an activity guide for [Planning walks](#) – this may be particularly useful for walk programme coordinators.

✔ Think about the type of walk

Consider planning **short walks**, at an **easy or leisurely pace**. These walks may be more popular as people get back to group walking.

✔ Walk within your limits

Avoid riskier outings – such as strenuous trails, or visits to remote locations – to minimise the risk of an incident taking place, and the need to call on the emergency services.

✔ Plan walks to avoid busy times and locations

Try to avoid congested areas, busy times of day and routes with narrow footpaths.

✔ Follow the latest government guidance on travel and transport

Staying local will often be the best option – we recommend planning circular walks which can be accessed on foot. See our page on [Restarting Ramblers activities](#) for the latest updates.

2. Understanding the risks

✔ Understand & manage the risks

Check our handy risk assessment to help you plan any steps you need to take to stay safe.

You must complete and keep a copy of your risk assessment for every walk that you lead.

✔ Recce your walk

You should recce the route as close to the date of the walk as possible, to make a note of hazards and plan any adjustments.



Remember to think about:

- Where you will stop for breaks and lunch
- Alternative routes you could take to avoid stiles or narrow footpaths
- Escape routes if you need to cut the walk short



Many facilities such as car parks and public toilets remain closed. Think about planning **circular routes** – which the group can access on foot from home.

3. Before the walk

✔ Advertise the walk

Make your walk listing as detailed as possible, so that walkers can decide if the walk will be suitable for them. Remember to include your contact details, and instructions on how to book.

✔ Contact walkers the day before

Remind everyone of the walk details, and any information they need to know beforehand – such as route details, car parking arrangements and items to bring.

4. At the start of the walk

✔ Be prepared

Always carry a first aid kit and face covering in case of incidents, a fully charged mobile phone, food and drink, and a map (whether online or paper). Make sure to tell someone where you are going.

✔ Hold a welcome briefing

As well as your normal checks & introductions - remind everyone about physical distancing, hygiene measures and any particular hazards on the route.

✔ Take a register

It is quick and easy to take a register using [the Ramblers app](#). Remember – in order to show on the app, your walk needs to be added to the Group Walks and Events Manager (GWEM).

5. During the walk

✔ Follow the government guidelines on social contact & physical distancing

Keep up to date and follow the latest guidelines. This is everyone's responsibility.

✔ Avoid touching gates and path furniture

If you do – wash your hands as soon as possible. We recommend carrying alcohol-based hand sanitiser. You might want to wear gloves too.

– Do not share food & drink, or equipment such as walking poles

✔ Walk responsibly

When other walkers are passing, remember to **stand back and give way**.

Always follow the [Countryside Code](#) (England & Wales) or [Access Code](#) (Scotland). Know where you can and can't walk, and be considerate to others.

6. After the walk

✔ Thank everyone

Check that everyone is OK, and thank them for joining the walk.

If you plan to spend time together socially after the walk – remember to follow the latest government guidelines on social contact and physical distancing.

✔ Report any incidents or near misses

Complete an [Incident Report Form](#) within ten days, and send it to us by email at incidents@ramblers.org.uk



Download a copy of the [Walk Leader's Checklist](#) – for more top tips and advice to help your walk run smoothly.

For more information about **leading group walks**, get in touch with the delivery team: volunteersupport@ramblers.zendesk.com