

Refereeing Regulations 2022

Definition

Nordic walking (NW) is a walk with alternating arm and leg movements and with appropriate technique and poles to assist in pushing off. In NW walking there should be no flight phase (a momentary lack of contact with the ground), at least one of the feet should maintain constant contact with the ground. The individual most important elements of the walking technique are, above all, of health significance

The most important aspects of the Nordic Walking technique

1. Natural lower body work
2. alternating arm and leg work
3. The arm movement should be from across the shoulder
4. The hand ends the movement behind the hip line
5. The arms work parallel to each other
6. In front, the hand is clamped on the stick, behind the hip, it is open. Closing and opening of the hand takes place at hip line level.
7. Active push-off takes place during the whole range of work with the stick

The most important aspects of correct Nordic walking poles

1. Appropriate weave of straps (the so-called glove) allowing the hand to work actively and generate pushback from the open palm
2. Appropriate length of pole - with a straight body and a vertical pole resting on the ground, the bent elbow forms an angle of approx. 90 degrees (+/- 10 degrees)

Errors resulting from incorrect walking technique.

<i>Correct components</i>	<i>Benefits of a properly executed component</i>	<i>Common mistakes</i>	<i>Overloads due to mistakes</i>
Natural work of the lower body	Natural working of the muscles and joints of the lower body	Lowering the centre of gravity	Load on the knee joints
		Elements of sport gait technique	Overload of the lumbar spine Hip joint overload
Alternating arm and leg work	Natural arm work	No alternating work	Unnatural arm work

The arm movement should be from the whole shoulder, with the elbow in a neutral position (slight flexion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activation of large muscle groups: back, shoulders • Through the work of large muscle groups, significant relief is generated for the joints of the lower limbs and spine • The swinging arm movement is a factor • relaxing tense neck muscles 	Working from the elbow alone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elbow joint strain • Exclusion of large muscle groups, i.e. back and shoulder muscles • Generating repulsion from the elbow joints and small arm muscles - a much smaller element of strain on the joints of the lower limbs and spine • Excessive tightening of immobilised shoulder and neck muscles • when working from the elbow joint alone - no possibility of crossing the hip line
		Work from the elbow only in front of you and from the shoulder behind you	
		Working by rolling the stick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no stick work, just flipping the stick without generating any pushback or putting the back muscles to work
		Working with completely straight elbows	Excessive, isometric (continuous) contraction of the shoulder and neck muscles, without a relaxation phase
Putting the shoulder in a neutral position	Natural tension and muscle balance in the shoulder joint	Shoulder extended forwards (in protraction)	Excessive tension and contraction of the chest muscles, the front of the shoulders or the MOS muscle
The hand finishes the movement behind the hip	Shoulder retraction (pulling the shoulders back) - natural straightening of the figure Opening the chest and stretching contracted chest muscles Activation of shoulder blades	Arm work only to the hip	Shoulders protraction (protrusion of shoulders forward) - strengthening of a slumped posture resulting from a sedentary lifestyle Working with your arms only in front of you and trying to straighten your posture involves overloading your lumbar spine.
		Arm work that ends in front of the hip, which often results in sloping posture	
The arms work in parallel with each other	Generating repulsion and relief in the same direction - merging	Shoulder work narrowing in front and wide behind	No combination of push and pull forces
		Shoulder work narrowing movement in front and back	

In front the hand is closed on the stick, behind the hip it is open. The hand closes and opens at hip level.	Control of arm operation throughout the entire range of movement	Walking with open hands Late closing walk hand - only at the point of insertion of the stick	Lack of control of the pole - high risk of the pole falling under our or others' feet
		walking with completely closed hands	No possibility to work by crossing the hip line backwards
Generating an active pushback throughout the entire range of stick work, with the stick being driven in when the offending leg makes contact with the ground	Involvement of large muscle groups in the upper body Stress relief for joints of lower limbs and spine	Marking a push-off - no push-off initiated when the heel of the offending leg makes contact with the ground	Lack of involvement of large muscle groups of the upper body Lack of relief for lower limb joints and spine
		No force generation (e.g. two-stroke or multiple strokes when moving backwards - the pole slips)	

Standard of warnings you may hear from referees on specific mistakes

Name of the mistakes	The message you will hear from the referee	What is the risk of mistake
Running up, shortening the course, unfair play behaviour, unsportsmanlike conduct (treading on poles, preventing overtaking, calling a competitor, referees, etc.).	disqualification	Red card - disqualification
No alternating work	Alternating operation mistake	Education
Lowering the centre of gravity	Low position error	Yellow card/warning
Elements of hip rotation resulting from the sports gait technique	Hip rotation error	Yellow card/warning
Working from the elbow alone	Elbow error	Yellow card/warning
Work from the elbow only in front of you and from the shoulder behind you		
Roll over stick		
Working the arm only to the hip	Range of motion error	Yellow card/warning
Working the arm in front of the hip, which often results in a sloping posture		
Shoulder work narrowing in front and wide behind Shoulder work narrowing movement in front and back	Parallel operation error	Yellow card/warning
Lack of pushback	Push-back error	Yellow card/warning

Walking with open hands	Open hands error	Warning/ Education
No trunk rotation (through shoulder protraction, not from lumbar region)	Shoulder error	Education
Shoulder in protraction		
Headphones in your ears	(retention of the player)	Yellow card

Warnings, penalties and awards

- A competitor is given a warning, penalty or reward verbally by the judge, without the need to stop the competitor, unless safety on the course requires it. An example of an announcement from a judge is as follows "Number 222, warning, elbow fault"
- not hearing the message from the judge does not result in not receiving a penalty warning. A complete list of warnings can be obtained in the judges' tent after the competition
- the referee has the possibility to educate the competitor on the route, the message in this case does not contain the information "warning, yellow card, red card". Such information does not result in any sanctions.

Education - verbal reminder of a mistake, in order to correct an element of NW technique. This information does not result in any sanction, nor is it recorded in the referee's record

A warning - may be given by the judge in case of minor violations in marching technique (multiple warnings may result in a yellow card. 5 km - 2 warnings, 10 km - 3 warnings, 21 km - 4 warnings. This information is recorded in the referee protocol

Yellow card - given by a judge in case of gross errors in NW march technique, resulting in violation of the rules of competition or may lead to serious overloading and health problems (receiving a yellow card more than once does not result in a red card). Receiving a yellow card results in a time penalty for the competitor (at the distance of 5km - 30 seconds, 10km - 1 minute, 21km - 2 minutes)

Red card - unsportsmanlike behaviour towards other participants and referees; deliberate obstructing of the route for other participants while overtaking, deliberate running up the route with an evident flying phase, shortening the distance, moving off the route, other gross errors and deficiencies in Nordic Walking technique violating safety on the route, e.g. vulgar behaviour, insulting competitors or referees. In the case of hidden cameras on the route of the competition, there is a possibility of disqualifying a competitor, after reviewing video materials, up to 48h after the competition.

Green card point - awarded in case of extremely good walking technique

Green card - the referee may not award a green card. The green card is a component of the points received from the judges to the green card. The total number of points awarded is 5km - two points, 10km - three points, 21km - four points

Other points of the rules

Overtaking - it is possible to overtake a competitor on the right or left side. For safety reasons, the person overtaking should draw the attention of the person overtaken by announcing "Attention left/right I am overtaking" from which side he/she will overtake the person. Overtaking a competitor should not result in a change/obstruction in his/her walking path. The overtaken person, after hearing the safety announcement "caution left/right I am overtaking", should not change their marching path.

Headphones - for safety reasons, the use of headphones is forbidden for communication between competitors, referees and other marshals (except for people with hearing aids). Using headphones during the competition will result in stopping the competitor on the route and a yellow card.

Hydration - is possible only in a specially designated area. If possible, the beginning and end of the hydration zone is marked with a horizontal or vertical sign. In the event of the need to rehydrate elsewhere, the athlete is obliged to stop in a safe place and not to obstruct anyone and to remove the poles.

Disqualification of a competitor on the basis of a report by other participants in the competition - there is a possibility of disqualification only if video footage is provided showing a violation of the rules qualifying for a red card.