

***By Foot Again, LLC***  
***Acknowledgment of Risks***  
***for Activities within Valley Forge National Historical Park***

**Nature of the Activity:** By Foot Again, LLC (hereafter referred to as BFA) is a business that provides instruction, private classes, and group classes in Nordic walking. Nordic walking is a type of fitness walking utilizing specially designed poles that has evolved from ski-training into a popular year-round exercise activity that is appropriate for all ages and most fitness levels. Some of the benefits of this healthful, outdoor exercise include: increases cardiovascular fitness; increases caloric consumption; weight control; tension reduction; strengthens leg, arm, abdominal, and other muscle groups; improves stamina and muscular endurance; improves posture and balance; and provides an opportunity for positive social interaction with others.

**Prerequisite Skills Required:** The following are abilities required of the participant: 1) being able to walk at least 5 miles or 2 hours on trails (unless special classes), 2) have enough coordination to walk with poles, 3) having appropriate equipment for the type of hike (e.g., appropriate shoes, sunglasses, hat, insect repellent, water bottle, clothes suitable for the weather), 4) be in adequate physical shape to go over all types of terrain on a trail, and 5) arrive adequately nourished for the activity relative to health issues (e.g., blood sugar issues, diabetes).

**Inherent Risks:** While there are many benefits to Nordic walking, BFA feels it is important that the PARTICIPANT/PARENT (which refers to **either** an ADULT Participant, **OR** a MINOR Participant and his/her PARENTS/GUARDIANS) understands that Nordic walking, like all fitness activities, involves some risks of injury that are inherent to the activity and cannot be avoided regardless of the actions taken by BFA.

Some of these inherent risks of the activity include, but are not limited to those listed below.

Activity-related risks (blisters, muscle soreness, falls, tripping on roots or rocks, dizziness, over-exertion, dehydration, exposure, snow-related walking hazards, becoming lost or separated from the group, falls due to surfaces in the parking lot, being struck by a car in the parking lot).

Environmental risks (stepping in holes, walking on uneven terrain, steep terrain, slippery exposed rocks, roots, or mud, falling limbs, encountering wild animals, bee stings, ticks or other insects, snakes, poison plants, being caught in a rainstorm or sudden change in the weather, sunny/hot weather, third party equipment or animals on the trail, and being away from immediate emergency medical care).

Conditions of the participant (dizziness, fainting, diabetic shock, poor vision (eyesight, fog, rain), and cardiovascular condition); and

Other risks (inappropriate actions of co-participants including careless handling of hiking poles; a participant overestimating his/her capacity; instructor misjudgment of environment, weather conditions, suitability of terrain, participant ability, or choice of reaction to emergency; faulty or malfunctioning equipment; inappropriate shoes or clothing of participant; exposure to infectious diseases).

***While it is impossible to eliminate all risk and possibility of injury***, BFA always focuses on the safety of the participant during both the instruction and participation phases of the activity – providing safety-related rules and policies as well as professional leadership.

BFA feels that it is important that the PARTICIPANT/PARENT understands the three types of injuries that can result from Nordic walking risks. First is the common *Minor Injury*. This type includes, but is not limited to, muscle strains and sprains, bruises, abrasions, contusions, rashes, and getting chilled or soaked. The second type of injury is the *Serious Injury*. Examples of serious injuries are microbial and viral diseases, broken bones, ligament and joint injuries, concussions, allergic reactions, heat stroke, and eye injury. These are rare, but do occasionally occur. The third type of injury is the *Catastrophic Injury*. Some examples of catastrophic injury are Lyme disease, COVID-19 disease, brain injury, paralysis, heart attack, and death. Even though the likelihood of such an injury is very remote, we feel that the PARTICIPANT/PARENT should be aware of all possibilities.

**Acknowledgment and Assumption of Inherent Risks:** I, the PARTICIPANT/PARENT, have read the above paragraphs and **know** that Nordic walking involves inherent risks that cannot be controlled or prevented by BFA or the National Park Service. **I understand the demands** of Nordic walking relative to my physical condition and skill level, and **I appreciate the types of injuries** that may occur as a result of Nordic walking activities and their potential impact on my well-being and lifestyle. **I hereby assert that my participation with BFA is voluntary and that I knowingly assume all inherent risks.**

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I, the PARTICIPANT/PARENT, confirm that this agreement supersedes any and all previous oral or written promises or agreements. I understand that this is the entire agreement between me and BFA regarding activities for activities within Valley Forge National Historical Park and cannot be modified or changed in any way by representations or statements by any agent or employee of BFA.

**In order for BFA to more effectively provide for the safety of the participant, BFA asks PARTICIPANT/PARENT to help us by certifying the following:** I, the PARTICIPANT/PARENT,

**Rules & Actions**

- agree to attempt only walks which I feel I am capable of performing safely.
- agree to stay in areas or on trails that will not place me in undue danger.
- agree to obey all safety rules and alert the leader to any violations or dangerous behavior of co-participants.

**Health & Safety**

- possess a sufficient level of skill and physical fitness for safe participation in BFA Nordic walking.
- have no health problems that would make participation in BFA Nordic walking unwise.
- acknowledge that BFA encourages each client to get medical clearance prior to participation.
- authorize BFA to administer emergency first aid or CPR and to secure emergency medical care or transportation (i.e., EMS) when deemed necessary by BFA; I agree to assume all costs of emergency medical care and transportation.
- realize that medical help may not be immediately available.
- acknowledge that it is the participant's duty to inform staff and cease exercise immediately if he/she feels any unusual discomfort (e.g., faintness, shortness of breath, high anxiety, chest pains) during participation.
- acknowledge that the provider may need to end my participation if I present a danger to myself or others.

I, the PARTICIPANT/PARENT, assume and accept full responsibility for myself, including all minor children in my care, custody, and control, for bodily injury, death or loss of personal property and expenses as a result of those inherent risks and dangers identified herein and those inherent risks and dangers not specifically identified, and as a result of negligence in participating in this activity.

**Acknowledgment of Understanding: I, the PARTICIPANT/PARENT, have read** this Acknowledgment and Assumption of Risk and **fully understand** its terms and acknowledge that this agreement shall be effective and binding upon myself, my heirs, assigns, personal representative and estate and for all members of my family, including minor children.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of PARTICIPANT (Please Print)      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of PARTICIPANT

**If Participant is a Minor, Parent/Guardian Must complete the following:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Parent/Guardian #1      Signature of Parent/Guardian #1      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Parent/Guardian #2      Signature of Parent/Guardian #2      Date