

# Health Walking

Health walking is for everyone. It's fun, sociable, free and if done regularly is a great way to get fit and stay in shape. Health walks can be for any duration but generally last no longer than an hour. For some, a five-minute walk to the shops can be a great workout but for others an hours brisk walk around a Sandwell Stride health walk provides a real challenge.

Health walking at any speed will burn calories, improve muscle tone, strengthen bones and make you feel mentally better. To add heart and lung fitness to this list you should aim to:

Feel warm and slightly out of breath but still be able to hold a conversation.

### How often should I be active?

You will feel great benefits from doing any health walks. Try to build up to being active for 30 minutes five times a week.

### Your health walk should include the following:

#### Warm up

- Start slowly
- Gradually increase your speed

#### Brisk walk During this section you should:

- Feel warmer
- Be slightly out of breath
- Still be able to hold a conversation

#### Cool down

- Gradually reduce your speed
- Bring your breathing and heart rate down slowly

### Levels

Short walk suitable for everybody, including wheelchair users.



Mainly on flat surfaces, no stiles but may include some steeper inclines. May not be wheelchair accessible.



Longer walk with steeper inclines, stiles and/or steps. Not wheelchair accessible.



This health walk has been classified as a level 3



# Health Walk Questionnaire

Before taking up health walking it's a good idea to work through the check list below:

Yes	No	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Has your doctor ever said that you have a heart condition and that you should only do physical activity recommended by a doctor or specialist?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you feel pain in your chest when you do physical activity?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	In the past month have you had a pain in your chest when not doing physical activity?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you lose your balance because of dizziness or do you ever lose consciousness?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have a bone or joint problem that could be made worse by a change in your physical activity?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Has a doctor ever recommended medication for your blood pressure or a heart condition?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you suffer from any breathing problems?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you or have you recently been pregnant?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you aware, through your own experience or doctors advice, of any other reason why it may not be safe for you to health walk?

If you have answered yes to any of the questions, seek medical advice to check the suitability of health walking as a safe form of exercise for you.



Sandwell NHS Primary Care Trust



Project is supported by the Sandwell Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

# Sandwell STRIDE



## Health Walk Map

# Forge Mill Lake

Local Nature Reserve, Sandwell Valley

distance: 2.3 miles

time: 1 hour (approx)



The River Tame



RSPB Reserve

Forge Mill Lake

One of a series of Health Walks to be found in and around Sandwell



# Forge Mill Lake Local Nature Reserve

level 3



Forge Mill Lake Local Nature Reserve

A walk of approximately 2.5 miles and 1 hour's duration on a mainly level ground.

From the RSPB car park, facing the visitors centre, walk to the right and follow the footpath down to a wooden boardwalk.

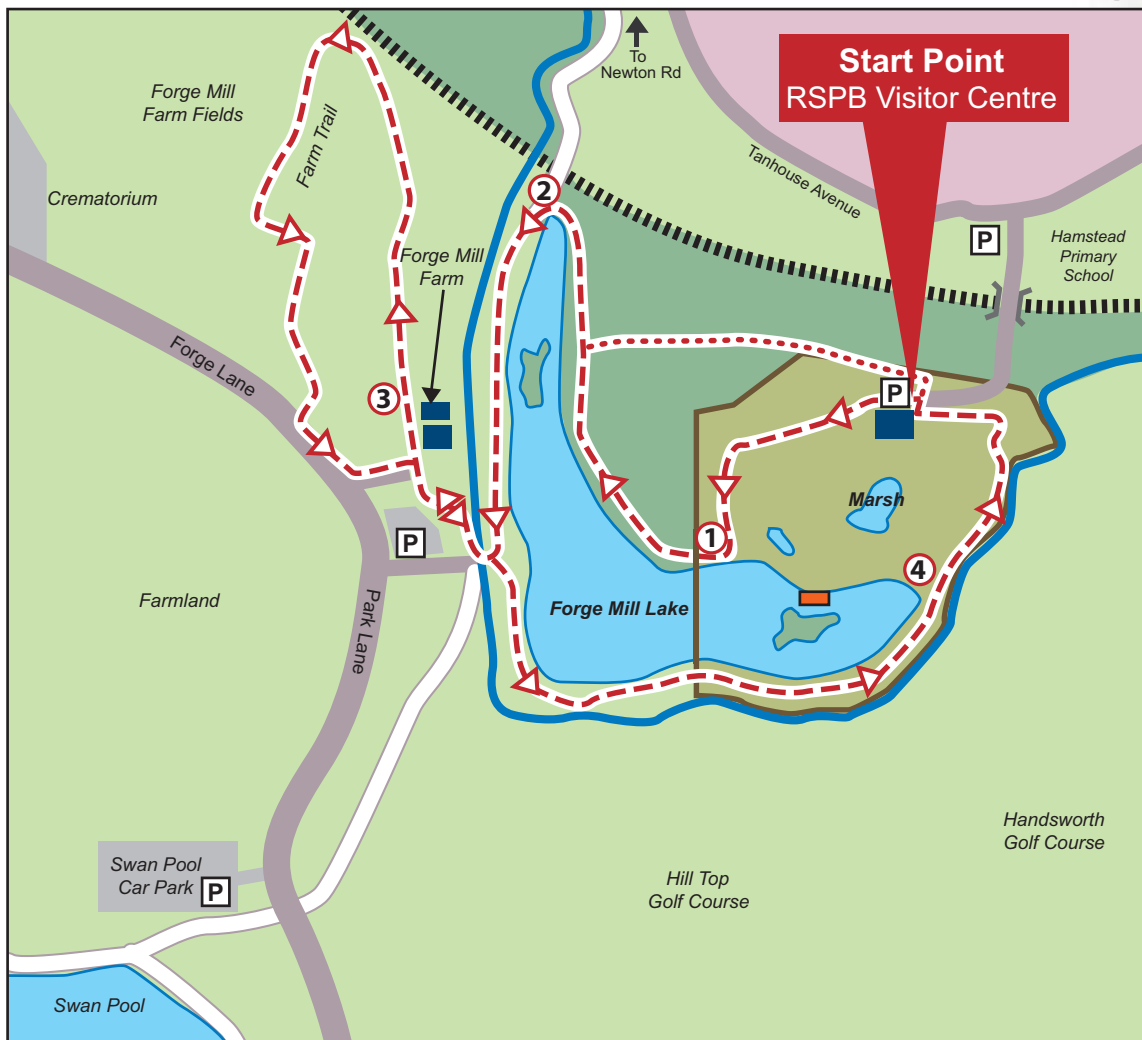
At the wooden boardwalk, you will see in front of you a metal gate leading to the lakeside hide, **1** Take the pathway to the right leading off the wooden boardwalk. At this point you are leaving the RSPB reserve. Follow this footpath along the edge of Forge Mill Lake until you reach the River Tame and railway bridge **2** (look out for a metal finger post).

Turn left so the lake is still on your left hand side and the river is on your right. When you reach the concrete ramp that leads into the lake, turn right over the bridge and into Forge Mill Lake car park. Once in the car park look for a black metal archway to your right. Pass under the archway and into the farmyard.

If you wish to take a break or miss out the next part of the walk there are picnic benches at the farm shop. Alternatively, continue to walk between the cattle shed and barns. **3** On the right hand side, you will see a chicken coop. Take the footpath on the left and follow the Farm Trail around the farm fields, finishing back at the farm shop.

Retrace your steps back towards Forge Mill Lake. Cross the river bridge and turn right. Follow the footpath, again keeping the lake to your left and the River Tame to your right.

Halfway along this path you will pass a bench and sign welcoming you back to the RSPB reserve. After a short distance, the pathway slopes left from the riverbank and becomes surfaced. **4** Follow this path back to the visitor centre and car park.



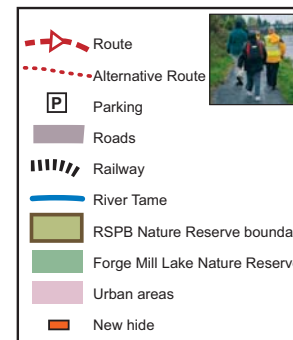
## Remember

**SAFETY:** Make sure you can always be seen by wearing bright coloured clothing.

**CLOTHING:** Wear comfortable shoes that support your feet and are suitable for the ground you are walking on. Layer your clothing so that you can remove/add items if you become too warm/cold.

**SELF:** Always let someone know where you are going and what time you plan to be back.

**AND:** If you haven't done much exercise for a while build up slowly. Your fitness will improve with regular walking so why not make your target a 30 minute walk on 5 days of the week!



For further information on Sandwell Stride Health Walks please call the Health Walks Co-ordinator on **0800 011 4656**