

Top tips for Guiding

Health

- Remember to ask the person you are guiding if they have any medical conditions that you may need to be aware of. Also remember to think about any medical condition you may have that they should be aware of.
- Is there anything that could prevent you and the person you are guiding from undertaking your trip safely? Seek advice if at all uncertain and make sure, if appropriate, that you and the person you are guiding take any medications with you on your trip.
- If you come into contact with a dog during your walk, it is important that you clean your hands afterwards. You could consider taking a hand sanitizer with you on your walks.

Keeping safe

- Ensure that someone knows where you are going and what time you are expected back.
- Plan your routes carefully, avoid known hazardous areas and walking through deserted or ill lit areas.
- Carry a mobile phone and always ensure that it is charged, that you have credit and it is switched on.
- If you see an incident, it is advisable that you do not stop to offer assistance, but report it to the police as soon as possible.
- If you are approached by someone unknown and feel uncomfortable or threatened in any way, keep walking and try to enter a shop or somewhere where there are other people. If the person does not leave you alone, call the police or ask someone else to do it for you.
- Carry some form of identification at all times.
- When using public transport or walking, do not carry valuable items or large amounts of cash with you.
- On entering unfamiliar private premises:
 - Be aware of exits.
 - Be aware of the layout, which way the doors open; if the doors lock behind you, know where keys are or how to unlock the doors.
 - Be aware of anything that may impede/obstruct a quick exit.
 - If you sit, choose a chair that is as near to the exit as possible.

Other potential hazards to think about

- Think about where you are and what you would do in the event of a fire, incident or other emergency situation.
- Try to avoid lifting or restraining the person you are guiding (to prevent a fall), as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Remember to think about the objects and people around you to avoid knocking into them, tripping or slipping over.
- Think about vehicles and using appropriate places to cross roads.

Weather

- If you are undertaking a walk during hot weather conditions, take plenty of water to drink and wear appropriate sunscreen, hat and sun glasses. Avoid walks between 12pm and 3pm when the sun is at it highest and hottest.
- If you are undertaking a walk during colder weather, consider if any snow or ice, for example, will prevent you from having a safe walk.

Your feet

Plan your walks carefully and think about the distance and the effect more walking than you're both used to may have on your feet. To make sure that your feet stay fit, you need to look after them. Ensure you:

- Wear the right shoes/boots for the activity you are undertaking.
- When you sit down for a rest get into the habit of putting your feet up.
- Remember, the more weight you carry the greater the strain on your back and feet.
- Wear comfortable insoles to cushion your feet.

Exercise can really help to keep your feet healthy; it tones up your muscles, helps to strengthen your arches and stimulates blood circulation. Try doing the following exercises regularly:

- Rising on tiptoes – stand with feet parallel and, holding on to a steady piece of furniture for support, rise slowly up and down. This exercises the leg muscles and helps strengthen the foot muscles.
- Point your toes – sitting down, extend and stretch the foot in as straight a line with the leg as possible.
- Rotate your feet – still sitting, extend your feet one at a time and rotate slowly at the ankle, as if you are trying to draw the largest circle possible with your big toe. Do this first in one direction, then the other.
- Wiggle your toes – remain sitting with your feet resting on the floor. Move your toes up and down.

Guide Dogs Video

<https://youtu.be/kpFSOYZrSsM>