

## Health Walking

Health walking is for everyone. It's fun, sociable, free and if done regularly it's 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 route 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.



Supported by

Sandwell NHS  
Primary Care Trust



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# Sandwell STRIDE



## Health Walk Map

# Priory Woods

Local Nature Reserve, Sandwell Valley

distance: 2.6 miles

time: 1 hour (approx)



Priory Woods

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



# Priory Woods Health Walk

Level 3



A walk of approximately 2.5 miles and 1 hour's duration. There are some uphill sections, and some paths can be muddy at times.

Starting with Sandwell Park Farm reception behind you, turn left and head into the car park and take the first path on your left into Priory Woods.

Follow this path over small bridges through the wood, bearing to the right to emerge at a flight of steps. At the top of the steps, turn left onto a tarmac track. Alternatively, to avoid the steps, take the path to your right to emerge at a kissing gate and then turn left onto the tarmac track.

Follow the track uphill, crossing the M5 motorway and continue ahead, ignoring the concrete track running off to the left and parallel to the motorway.

Continue for a few metres before turning left through a kissing gate back into Priory Woods. **1** Follow the path through the trees, coming shortly to Ice House Pool on your right. Follow the path round, keeping the pool to your right. Look out for grey herons here - part of the heronry which established itself on the pools' islands in 1995.

On reaching another pool (Cascade Pool), bear left and continue round the pool with the water on your right. Shortly after passing a smaller pool on the left, turn left at a footpath junction, by the stump on an old tree. Follow the path to emerge on a track with Sandwell Park Golf Course ahead of you. Turn left and follow the track past the remains of Sandwell Priory and Holy Well. (More information about these sites is available at Sandwell Park Farm).

Passing the Priory, continue along the track, starting to go uphill. After approximately 100 metres, follow a path which branches off to the right, **2** heading uphill through a silver birch woodland. Where this path forks, take the left hand path, coming shortly to an open area under the power cables.

Here, take the left hand path, crossing the ride diagonally, continuing through the oak and hazel woodland to arrive at a kissing gate. Turn left and follow the track downhill.

Look out on the right hand side for a waymarker post **3** and turn right through the trees along a barely discernable path, bearing right after 20 metres to emerge by two very old sweet chestnut trees (over 230 years old). Turn right, keeping the barbed wire fence on your left, to meet a track.

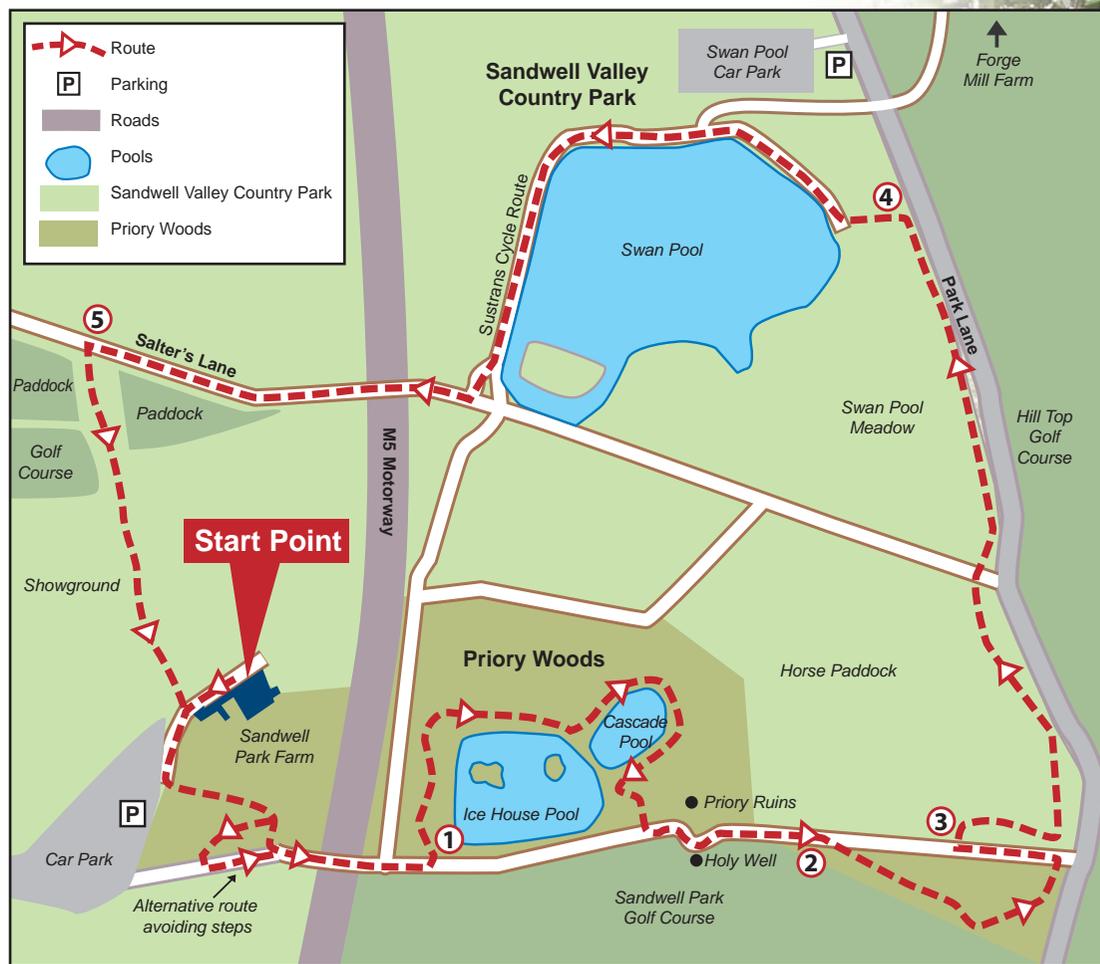
Turn left, downhill, along the track with horse paddocks on your left. Where the track turns sharply left, keep ahead along a path between Swan Pool Meadow on the left and Park Lane on the right.

Where the fenced off area on your left ends, take a path on your left, **4** taking care over a small bridge, to soon emerge at Swan Pool. Turn right and continue around the pool, with the water on your left.

The path soon becomes tarmac, part of the National Sustrans cycleway. Watch out for cyclists along this stretch!

Shortly after crossing the second of two bridges, the path forks. Take the right hand path, turning sharply right to re-cross the M5 motorway. Continue along this track, ignoring two paths off to the left. Just before the track starts to go uphill, between tall hedgerows, take a tarmac path on the left **5** between fields where sheep or cattle may be grazing.

Keep straight ahead coming to an open, grassy area (the Showground) in front of Sandwell Park Farm. Bear slightly to the right until the buildings come into view. Cross the Showground, to arrive back at Sandwell Park Farm.



## 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**