



Stunning landscapes, wonderful natural and historic heritage – Scotland has plenty to offer for everyone who wants to go for a walk. And walking is a great way to keep fit and active!

If you're looking for a short stroll close to home, a woodland walk with the family, or a hike into the hills, you can find everything in Scotland's outdoors, any time of the year.

This leaflet will help you to get the most out of walking in Scotland.

There's never been a better time to go for a walk!



Our **Take the Path to 2014** programme aims to help secure a physical activity legacy from the Commonwealth Games by encouraging the whole population to walk more. Find out if there are Medal Routes near you by visiting our website at [www.ramblers.org.uk/medalroutes](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/medalroutes)



## Ramblers Scotland

The Ramblers has been promoting walking and representing the interests of walkers in Great Britain since 1935. We have 54 local groups across Scotland, supported by the Ramblers Scotland office near Kinross.

The overall aims of Ramblers Scotland are to encourage walking and public understanding of the outdoors by:

- Promoting walking for health and pleasure
- Securing and facilitating access
- Protecting the outdoor environment

Why not join your local Ramblers Group to make more walking friends and to support our campaigning work? Call Membership Services at our GB office on 020 7339 8595 or see [www.ramblers.org.uk/join](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/join) for details.

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**ramblers scotland**  
at the heart of walking

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# Walking in Scotland

Ramblers Scotland's guide to getting more out of walking



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## Going for a walk in Scotland

Scotland has world-renowned rights of public access to most land and inland water through the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. Both the use of these rights and the management of the land and water must be carried out in a responsible way. Guidance on this is provided in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code at [www.outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com)

### Enjoy Scotland's outdoors responsibly

Everyone has the right to be on most land and inland water providing they act responsibly. Your access rights and responsibilities are explained fully in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Whether you're in the outdoors or managing the outdoors, the key things are to:

- **take responsibility for your own actions**
- **respect the interests of other people**
- **care for the environment.**

Visit [outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://outdooraccess-scotland.com) or contact your local Scottish Natural Heritage office.



## Further information

Our website, [www.ramblers.org.uk/scotland](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/scotland) has lots of useful information about walking in Scotland with further links to information on access rights and the Code, walking routes, including local Medal Routes, core paths and Scotland's Great Trails, as well as the accommodation and holiday providers who can help you along the way.

You can also find links to local Ramblers Groups and other organisations, along with contact details for all access officers in local authorities and national park authorities.



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# Tips for walkers in Scotland

## Transport and parking

Try to make use of public transport or a bicycle if you need to travel to get to the start point of your walk. But buses and trains can be irregular outside urban areas, so share cars where possible. Use car parking facilities where they exist. Vehicles can usually be parked within 15 yards of the road without causing a traffic offence, but make sure you aren't blocking gates or tracks.

## Show consideration

Respect the privacy of those in a house when walking nearby – access rights do not include houses and gardens. Remember that the countryside is also a place of work for many people, so try to avoid interfering with land management operations.

## Walking with children

Kids love being active out of doors, but they don't always see the point of 'just' going for a walk. Allow time for fun things to do while walking, such as playing games along the way, looking for 'treasure', or having a race to the top, and make sure the walk is varied. Have plenty of snacks at hand to keep them going. It's a great chance to spend time together and help them learn about the outdoors.

## Walking with a dog

Having a dog is a great way of making sure you get plenty of regular exercise! However, dogs must be kept under proper control. Don't take your dog into fields of young animals. If crossing a golf course, keep your dog on a short lead. Keep your dog on a short lead or under close control if walking amongst livestock and be prepared to let the dog go if cattle react aggressively. Most importantly, pick up and remove any mess left by your dog.

## Sharing the path

In Scotland, walkers, cyclists, horse riders – and canoeists – all enjoy the same rights of access. Paths can be used by everyone, apart from those in motorised vehicles\*, provided people are acting responsibly. Be aware of other users and be prepared to let other travellers pass, especially if you are walking in a large group.

\* Apart from people with a disability using a vehicle adapted for their use.

## What to do if ...

### ... you're asked to use an alternative route

You may be asked by land managers not to walk in a particular area when, for example, tree felling is taking place or you might disturb nesting birds. Such requests should apply to specific areas and times and be for short periods. Use any reasonable alternative route suggested.

### ... you need to contact the land manager

Be helpful and try to contact the land manager if, for example, you come across injured livestock. Do your best to find the farmer or speak to someone locally.

### ... you have an accident

Walking is a very safe activity, but in an emergency call 999 and ask for the police, letting them know your location. They will contact mountain rescue and ambulance services, as appropriate.

### ... your route is obstructed

If your progress along a path is hindered, for example, by a broken or damaged stile, inform the land manager if you can. If you believe there is an intentional obstruction, such as a barbed wire fence across a path, contact the access officer in the local authority or national park authority (see [www.outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com)).

### ... you're approached by a land manager

Meeting farmers, gamekeepers and stalkers is a great way of learning more about the area you are walking in and makes your day out a bit more sociable. However, if you believe you are walking in a responsible way, yet a land manager tries to prevent or deter you from walking on their land, remain calm. Having listened to their reasons, you may continue to take access or choose to leave. Later you can contact the local access officer to report the incident, and please also inform the Ramblers Scotland office.

## Into the hills? – be prepared

### Planning your route

Work out where you are going before you set off, and have a Plan B, or escape route, in case you need to turn back early. On the hills you should have a map and compass, even if you also use a GPS or a mobile phone – batteries can run out!

### Dealing with Scottish weather

It is easy to feel you have experienced four seasons in one day in Scotland, so be prepared for all weathers, especially if you are heading into the hills. Check the weather forecast before setting off and be ready to change your plans accordingly. Don't carry on regardless if the weather is closing in – your route will still be there on another day!

### What to take

It makes sense to be warm, dry and comfortable when walking so on most days a waterproof jacket is useful – or essential. In colder weather a hat, gloves and spare layers are needed. For higher level walking, you'll need waterproof trousers and walking boots. It's a good idea to carry a first aid kit, plus enough water and food to keep you going! Walking poles can be useful, especially for steep downhill routes.

### Learning walking skills

As we become more experienced walkers, we all learn about hillcraft – such as how to read a map and navigate, and scrambling skills. Ranger services often run guided walks which are a good way of learning more, and you can study summer and winter skills on courses held throughout Scotland by various providers. The national outdoor training centre is at **sportscotland's** Glenmore Lodge in the Cairngorms. See: [www.glenmorelodge.org.uk](http://www.glenmorelodge.org.uk)

## Environmental impacts

### Litter

There are few litter bins in the countryside and very rarely any rubbish collections up a hill, so make sure you carry all your litter away with you. Why not pick up any other litter you find too, to make sure the countryside remains clean and pleasant for everyone?

### Damage to paths

Popular paths can become damaged through heavy use, especially in wet weather. Avoid extending any damage by staying on the path and don't cut across corners. Consider helping to improve paths through voluntary conservation work or through a donation to path projects.

