

Make Your Own Walking Stick

Walking stick, hiking pole, trekking pole, you will see people on the trail, and sometimes walking down the street, carrying these items. You can use these sticks or poles to help you climb up or down a hill, decreasing the impact on your knees and helping you with balance. They'll help move some of the weight from your legs to your back, arms and shoulders, and by keeping your hands higher and closer to your heart, can help keep your hands from swelling while you walk. Your hiking stick also can help you test the ground ahead of you to see what areas a soggy you want to avoid. Use a light grip on your walking stick to prevent blisters.

Don't forget to send us a photo of your completed walking stick!

Activity Supplies

- We've provided you with a walking stick. If you decide to make another, find a tree you have permission to cut down that is about 1 ½ to 2 inches thick at the largest end.
- Rawhide, paracord, yarn or twine to create a wrist lanyard.
- A cap for the end of your stick to prevent it from splitting or scraping the floor. Use a copper, rubber or PVC cap available from your local hardware store, or another type of tip used on the legs of furniture.
- Decorative supplies—beads, charms, feathers, paint, stain, rawhide, paracord, yarn, a rock with a hole, etc.
- Sandpaper
- With parental supervision—hand saw, pocketknife, wood burner, polyurethane, etc.

Activity Instructions

1. Use a hand saw to cut your walking stick to the appropriate length. When standing with your arms at your sides, the walking stick should be about 6 inches above your elbow.
2. With parental supervision, if you choose to do so, remove any branches and the bark from the stick. You may leave some or all of the bark on your stick. Some people choose to sand the bark down.
3. Create a wrist strap. Position the strap so that it is comfortable when you place your hand up through the bottom of the strap loop. As an option, you can create a grip for your walking stick (see Supportive Information).
4. Decorate your walking stick using an assortment of materials (see Supply list). Don't ever consider your walking stick complete but think of it as a Memory Stick and add items to recount special memories you make while hiking.



5. If your walking stick is green when you start it will be easier to peel the bark. But green sticks need to dry for 2 to 4 weeks before you can apply paint, stain or polyurethane. Place your stick in a warm dry place to help it dry. As the stick dries it will become lighter in weight.
6. Consider picking up a small compass that you can embed in the top of the walking stick (available online).
7. Consider adding your initials to your walking stick.
8. How about painting or carving a ruler into your walking stick? You can use this to measure the diameter of the enormous tree you find on the trail, or the tracks you find in the mud to help you identify what animal walks the trail before you.
9. Consider carving or painting tracks of some of the mammals common to where you hike, or shapes of common leaves. These can be helpful as you try to identify things while along your hike.

Supporting Information

With parental support, watch YouTube videos on how to wrap a grip on your walking stick.

Outdoor activity to correlate with project

1. Take a hike using your walking stick. Besides the reasons noted in the introduction, how is your stick useful (moving brush out of the way if walking off the trail; knocking down spider webs hanging across the trail; as a pointer to show things to your hiking companions).

Follow up questions

1. How can having a tip on your walking stick help protect or harm the environment?
2. How is your energy after a hike when you use a walking stick? (Your body should be in a more upright posture, with your head raised and chest out, making it easier to breathe.)
- 3.

Additional Links and Resources

1. Learn about the history of walking sticks at https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walking_stick
2. Learn about trekking sticks at https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trekking_pole

Sketch your walking stick design and make notes of what you plan to add after a hike.

Describe your walking stick and why you chose to decorate it as you did.

Describe or draw a picture of a favorite day in nature. What made it memorable? Where were you? What season was it?

Divide a page in quarter and label each section with a season—spring, summer, fall and winter. Hike the same area each season and make notes or draw a picture of what changes you note.