

Walking for health

It's good to walk, new research clearly shows that walking is the ideal way to increase the level of physical activity needed to maintain health and fitness for people of all ages.

How far and how often:

The current recommendation for physical activity is:

- 30 minutes of brisk walking five times a week is all it takes to feel the difference.
 - 'Brisk' walking means walking so that you breathe a little faster, feel warmer and have a slightly faster heartbeat
 - It doesn't need to be difficult and you should still be able to hold a conversation
- For further information about health walks, visit www.whi.org.uk, the 'walking the way to health' website.

Walking is the perfect activity for health.

It can:

- Make you feel good
- Give you more energy
- Help you sleep better
- Help you reduce stress
- Keep your heart strong
- Reduce blood pressure
- Help to manage your weight

So why walk?

- It's the sure safe way to health and fitness
- It's a chance to meet people and make friends
- Almost everyone can do it
- You can do it anywhere and any time
- You don't need any equipment – apart from comfortable walking shoes
- There's very little risk of injury
- It doesn't hurt
- You can start slowly and build up gently
- It's free and it's easy

Other walking links

The Swindon and North Wiltshire Timberland Trails leaflets describe walks in Wroughton, Chiseldon and Purton. The full colour leaflets are available from the Great Western Community Forest office. Alternatively you can download a copy from the website.

'Forests on your Doorstep' is a leaflet which focuses on six community woodlands close to populated areas in and around Swindon, Shaw Forest Park, Purton Wood, Peatmoor Copse, Croft Wood, Warneage Wood and Stratton Woodland all feature and give details on access, age of woodland, condition of paths and whether dogs are permitted. There are also maps giving directions to each site. In the future there will be a series of such leaflets, giving details of all woodland in the Great Western Community Forest with public access. Leaflets are available from the GWCF office. Alternatively you can download a copy from the website.

The Great Western Community Forest is creating a green network of woodlands, open spaces and areas for wildlife. This will create a greener and healthier environment that will bring pleasure to people for generations to come. For more information call the Great Western Community Forest on 01793 466324 or visit the website.



www.forestweb.org.uk

The National *communityforest* Partnership

Vale of White Horse

North Wiltshire District Council

Swindon Borough Council

Public transport
Information about public transport can be obtained from **Thamesdown Transport** 01793 428428

Stagecoach
01793 521415

Websites

- Great Western Community Forest www.forestweb.org.uk
- Forestry Commission www.forestry.gov.uk
- Environment Agency www.environment-agency.gov.uk
- Swindon Borough Council www.swindon.gov.uk
- 'walking the way to health' www.whi.org.uk

How to get there

Nightingale Lane is directly opposite the Village Hotel and Leisure Club on Old Vicarage Lane in South Marston. Nightingale Wood is at the end of Nightingale Lane where Forestry Commission signs welcome you at the entrance to the wood.

Ordnance Survey maps

Landranger 173 and 174 Explorer 169 and 170

For more information about the Great Western Community Forest call

01793 466324 or visit our website.

For more information about the Forestry Commission call 01594 833057 or visit the website.

Forest Discovery

Nightingale Wood

in the Great Western Community Forest



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www.forestweb.org.uk

Nightingale Wood

in the Great Western Community Forest



■ About Nightingale Wood

Nightingale Wood is owned and managed by Forestry Commission England. The wood covers an area of 52 hectares (128 acres) on the edge of Swindon, near the village of South Marston. Forestry Commission England has planted all the trees and they have worked closely with the Great Western Community Forest to ensure that Nightingale Wood is, and remains, a great place for you to go. Here on the edge of Swindon is a wonderful new woodland where peace and quiet can be felt, a place where visitors can always enjoy the countryside close to their homes.

■ Access for all

Every effort has been made by Forestry Commission England to make Nightingale Wood fully accessible. The paths are surfaced to a high standard, benches have been provided along the woodland walks, the picnic tables are easy to get to and there are no stiles. So if you use a wheelchair or if you have young children and a buggy, you will find Nightingale Wood welcoming and easy to use.

■ Wildlife at Nightingale Wood

Nightingale Wood has a lot to offer the enthusiastic wildlife watcher. In summer skylarks soar, singing their song of the english countryside and yellowhammers perch in the hedgerows, chanting their tune of 'a bit of bread and no cheese' for those who care to listen. In the winter, the old hedgerows fill with redwings and fieldfares; these cousins of the blackbird feast on the red berries from the hawthorn bushes. Of the larger animals, the one you are most likely to see is the roe deer, although you may also be lucky enough to see a fox crossing the path in front of you.

■ Broadleaf trees

There are thousands of trees in Nightingale Wood, many of them you will recognise and as you enter the wood from the car park the first thing you see is an area of native oak. Other trees you might recognise on your walk include ash, hazel, beech and sycamore. Those less familiar are the field maple, hornbeam, alder and walnut. All the trees look good throughout the year although it is in the autumn and the spring when so much is changing that the woodland is ablaze with colour.



■ Conifer trees

A stand of Corsican pine trees bring year round colour to Nightingale Wood. As well as being evergreen these handsome conifers provide shelter for the smaller birds that spend winter in the U.K. They are fast growing and it is easy to see how important they are in the landscape. In years to come the sun will light up the trees and the paths beneath them, making it a very special place to enjoy a woodland walk at the close of day.

■ The South Marston Brook and Brook Meadow

Many years ago, the South Marston Brook was straightened, the meanders disappeared, sluices were built to control flooding and the field became a water meadow. The meanders were reinstated in 1999 along with the ponds, known technically as scrapes. From the bird hide you can look out over the brook, a quiet place to rest and watch the birds and animals as they come and go. During the nesting season, please keep your dog away from the meadow so as not to disturb the many birds that use the meadow for nesting and raising young.