

# INWA CONVENTION 2025

LAHTI, FINLAND 10/11 SEPTEMBER



**Get ready for an inspiring and energising INWA Convention 2025! This year's programme is packed with world-class content designed to educate, challenge and connect Nordic Walking instructors, trainers and enthusiasts from around the globe.**



## KEYNOTE ADDRESS - LEENA JÄÄSKELÄINEN

Leena Jääskeläinen—often hailed as the “godmother of Nordic Walking”—is a true pioneer of this global fitness movement. As a PE teacher in Espoo in 1966, she was the first to integrate walking with ski poles into physical education, firmly believing it was suitable for everyone. She continued promoting pole walking through her roles at the University of Jyväskylä (1968–71) and later as Chief Inspector in the Board of General Education (1973–91), championing it in schools and media alike. In 1987, she gave the first public demonstration of pole-based walking at the Finlandia Walk in Tampere—an event that would spark international attention. Her ground breaking work laid the foundation for Nordic Walking to grow into a worldwide phenomenon. It’s a privilege to have her deliver

the keynote address at the INWA Convention 2025, where she’ll share invaluable insights from nearly six decades of advocacy, innovation, and leadership in Nordic Walking.





## DR RITVA MIKKONEN

*Docent of Exercise Physiology | Vice Director, Sports Technology Unit, Vuokatti | Senior Lecturer, University of Jyväskylä*



In this engaging lecture, Dr. Ritva Mikkonen explores the complex interplay between hormones, training, and performance in physically active and athletic females. Drawing on her extensive research, she will examine how both natural hormonal fluctuations (e.g. the menstrual cycle) and exogenous influences (such as hormonal contraceptives or menstrual dysfunction) affect exercise responses, adaptations, and motor control. The session will also highlight emerging evidence on low energy availability and altitude exposure, with practical implications for health and performance. Dr. Mikkonen will further reflect on findings from her doctoral research into the challenges and benefits of combining strength and endurance training in recreational athletes.

## HISTORY OF INWA – 25 YEARS IN 25 MINUTES

*Aki Karihtala, INWA President*

A fast-paced and engaging look at the milestones, people, and global impact of the International Nordic Walking Federation. From its founding vision in Finland to its role in setting global standards, education, and events, this presentation highlights key moments from INWA's 25-year journey. Discover how the organisation has helped shape Nordic Walking into a worldwide movement—and where it's heading next.



## ADDING POWER TO YOUR NORDIC WALKING – HOW TO TRAIN FOR COMPETITION

*Naohiro Takahashi, INWA Head of Competition and International Trainer*

Explores how to build strength, speed, and endurance specifically for competitive Nordic Walking. Learn practical techniques to improve propulsion, increase cadence, and enhance whole-body coordination, alongside targeted exercises to boost performance. Whether you're preparing for races or simply want to walk faster and stronger, this workshop will give you the tools and training principles to take your Nordic Walking to the next level.

LECTURE & PRACTICAL





## THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT - EXPLORING POLE LENGTH

*Karen Ingram, INWA Head of Education & International Trainer with Naohiro Takahashi, INWA Head of Competition & International Trainer*

What difference does pole length actually make? How does our pole choice affect posture, biomechanics, muscle engagement, and overall walking efficiency? Explore the science behind pole length before conducting a group experiment in the practical session.

LECTURE & PRACTICAL



## CONNECTING WITH YOUR INNER CHILD

*Katie Atkins, INWA Lead Children & Teens*

Find your inner child/teen and see the many benefits of Nordic walking for these age groups! A carousel of fun Nordic walking activities that will highlight the benefits of Nordic Walking for your younger self from discovering your inner 8 year old to time out in the teenage years. Expect Physical Literacy, well being, teamwork and creative thinking all delivered through Nordic walking! Inspire the next generation of Nordic Walkers and add fun to your adult sessions.

PRACTICAL





## THE SPINAL ENGINE – DRIVING ROTATION IN WALKING

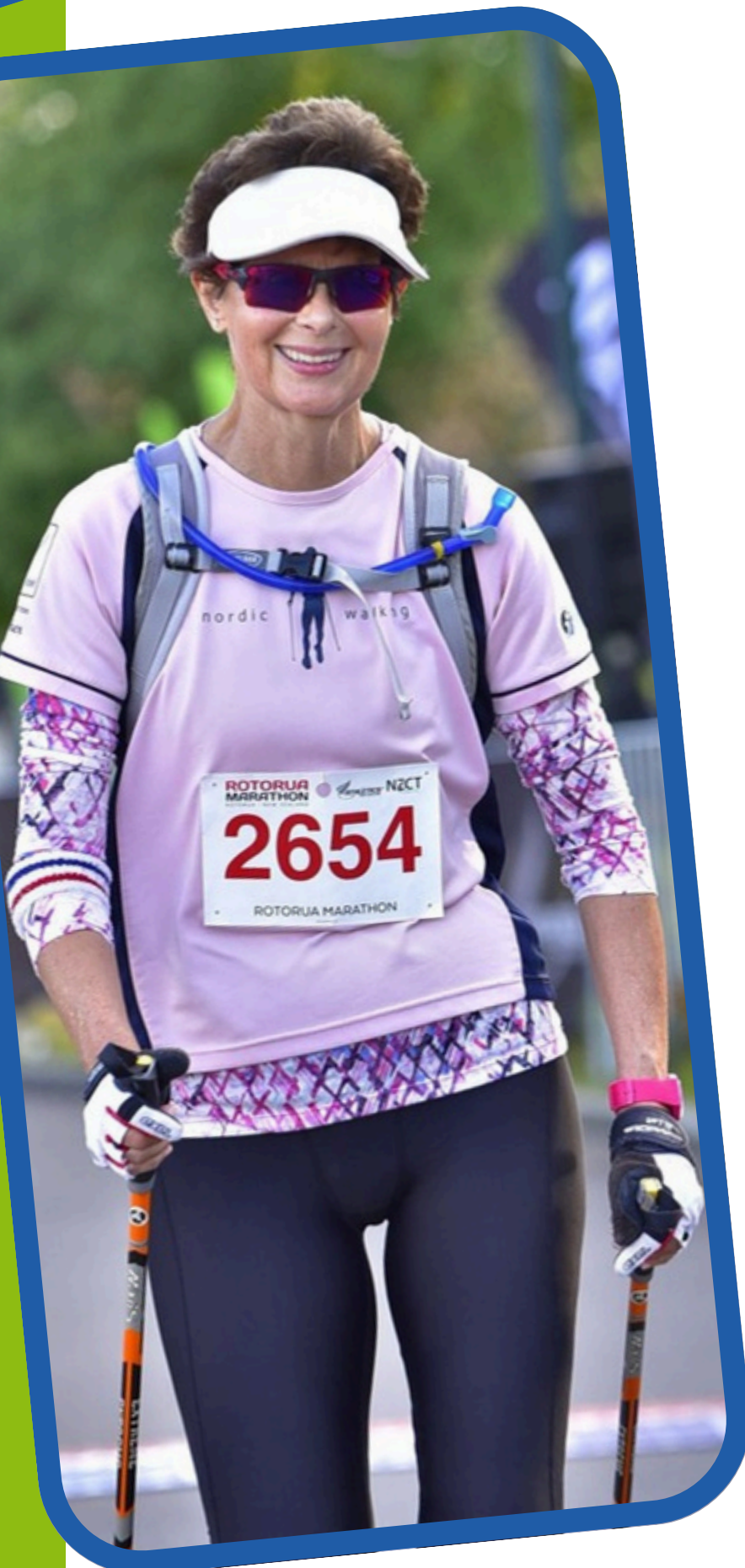
*Karen Ingram, INWA  
Head of Education &  
International Trainer*



Spinal rotation is a vital element of natural, efficient walking—and it's the focus of Step 4 in the INWA 10 Step Method. This session explores how the spine can act as a powerful engine for locomotion, driving movement through rotation and counter-rotation. Learn how to harness the spine's role in propulsion to enhance posture, balance, and coordination for a more fluid, whole-body walking technique. The workshop includes practical exercises to improve thoracic rotation, mobilise the pelvis, and strengthen the core muscles that support rotational control.

**LECTURE & PRACTICAL**





## THE SCIENCE OF NORDIC WALKING – AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

*June Stevenson, National  
Trainer, Nordic Kiwi*

Explore key scientific studies that have shaped technique, training, and health recommendations, highlighting how research has underpinned the growth of Nordic Walking. Look ahead to emerging trends, innovations, and research areas that may influence the future of Nordic Walking worldwide.

LECTURE

## STRENGTH TRAINING ON THE MOVE

*Natalia Palacios Samper, INWA Head of Education & International Trainer*

Muscle strength is vital for daily life—it supports mobility, balance, and independence. In Nordic Walking, whether for competition, recreation, or health, strong muscles improve efficiency, enhance performance, and help prevent injury. This practical workshop introduces easy, adaptable strength exercises that can be integrated into everyday training. Participants will explore both basic and complementary movements designed to support Nordic Walking technique and overall functional fitness.

PRACTICAL





## TEACHING THE INWA 10 STEP METHOD – SPEED DATING STYLE!

Get ready for a fast-paced, hands-on workshop that brings the INWA 10 Step Method to life in a fun and engaging way. In this 60-minute session, you'll rotate through 10 interactive stations—each one focusing on a different step of the method. Like speed dating, when the whistle blows, it's time to move on! This dynamic format will deepen your understanding, sharpen your technique, and give you practical tips for coaching each step effectively.

Various presenters

PRACTICAL



## HOW TO CREATE A KILLER SOCIAL MEDIA POST – WITHOUT LOSING YOUR BRAND VOICE (OR YOUR MIND!)

*Kelly Bennett, INWA Social Media Manager*



Explore how to create effective, brand-consistent social media posts that reflect your personality, attract the right audience, and feel human, not automated. Learn practical strategies and time-saving tips for defining your brand and developing a clear, consistent voice, using AI tools, writing captions that sound natural and on-brand, creating professional-looking graphics in Canva, finding the right mix of hashtags to grow your reach and engagement.

Whether you're starting from scratch or want to improve what you're already doing, this session will leave you with new ideas, smart shortcuts, and renewed confidence to take your Nordic Walking business further online.

LECTURE



## NORDIC WALKING FOR PARKINSONS OR MIXED ABILITY GROUPS.

*Christine Stanley, INWA Nordic  
Walking Instructor, Parkinsons UK  
Ambassador*

This practical and inclusive workshop is designed for working with participants with Parkinson's or mixed abilities. Through interactive and engaging activities, it aims to stimulate interest, build confidence, and encourage collaboration among all group members. The focus is on creating a supportive and enjoyable environment where participants can explore core skills at their own pace. Opportunities for feedback and adaptation will help individuals progress according to their abilities, while promoting communication, connection, and above all—fun!

PRACTICAL



## NORDIC WALKING FOR CANCER

***Natalia Palacios Samper, INWA  
Head of Education & International  
Trainer***

Cancer patients and cancer survivors face a range of physical and emotional side effects. Exercise is a proven tool to improve the quality of life, physical function, and overall wellbeing in this population. Nordic walking is an important instrument to improve the quantity of physical activity, increase the speed of the physical activity, create balanced exercise programmes and to increase time in contact with nature. This workshop will show different adaptations of Nordic walking for these patients.

**PRACTICAL**





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**€195 per person**

**BOOKING LINK FOR CONVENTION**

BOOK HOTEL Opiston Kunkku

BOOK the LAHTI PARTY

For more information please contact:

[info@inwa-nordicwalking.com](mailto:info@inwa-nordicwalking.com)



*See you in Lahti! ♥*