

INWA NORDIC WALKING CONVENTION

OTSU CITY, JAPAN 12/13 NOV 2026



Beyond Technique: The Art and Science of Teaching Nordic Walking

Join a global community of instructors and trainers to explore what truly defines great Nordic Walking teaching.

Through practical workshops and inspiring talks, gain fresh insights, share ideas, and elevate your impact.

Learn. Connect. Inspire.



WELCOME ADDRESSES

Aki Karihtala, INWA President

INWA President Aki Karihtala will open the Convention with a warm welcome, setting the tone for the days ahead.

His address will include key highlights from INWA's work over the past year, sharing progress, developments, and the continued growth of Nordic Walking worldwide.

This opening session offers a valuable moment to reflect on our global community and look ahead to the future of INWA.



Chikako Ohta, JNFA President

Join us in Japan as we are welcomed by our host member country, the Japan Nordic Fitness Association (JNFA), led by President Chikako Ohta. In this opening session, you'll be introduced to the story of Nordic Walking in Japan—how it began, how JNFA has developed, and why the activity has grown so successfully across the country.

Through insights, history, and highlights, this session will set the scene for our time in Japan, offering a deeper understanding of the culture, community, and passion behind Nordic Walking in this unique and inspiring setting.



PROTEIN, MUSCLE FUNCTION & HEALTHY AGING

Satoshi Fujita Ph.D, Professor, College of Sport and Health Science, Ritsumeikan University, Japan

Maintaining muscle health is essential for mobility, independence, and quality of life as we age. This session explores how dietary protein intake and physical activity, including Nordic Walking, work together to support muscle maintenance and healthy ageing.

Drawing on current scientific evidence, the session explains the importance of protein quality, quantity, and timing, and how exercise enhances the effectiveness of nutritional strategies. Participants will also gain insights into the causes and prevention of sarcopenia and the role of lifestyle in maintaining strength and function.

The session bridges current research findings with practical strategies for promoting healthy, active lifestyles

LECTURE



JAPAN'S PLAYBOOK: BUILDING NORDIC WALKING CIRCLES FOR HEALTHY LONGEVITY

***Takayuki Kawamura, Ph.D, Professor, School of Health Sciences
Tohoku Fukushi University, Japan***

Japan is often described as a living laboratory for healthy longevity. As a super-aging society, communities face challenges such as frailty, dementia risk, and social isolation. At the same time, life-course issues such as childhood obesity, declining physical fitness, and underweight among some young women remain important public health concerns.

This session shares a practical playbook for INWA Nordic Walking instructors. While the INWA technique remains unchanged, the focus is on how programmes are delivered—running safe, repeatable sessions, developing short courses into self-sustaining Nordic Walking circles, and connecting activities with community-based integrated care systems.

Participants will gain practical insights into how Nordic Walking can support health, social connection, and active aging in communities.

LECTURE



PRACTICAL

LECTURE



LEAN TO MOVE: TURNING GRAVITY INTO PROPULSION

Karen Ingram, INWA Joint Head of Education & International Trainer

Why is **forward lean** such a critical element of effective Nordic Walking? In this engaging session, Karen Ingram, International Trainer for INWA, explores the movement science behind lean through the concept of Gravitational Propulsion in Human Locomotion. Drawing on biomechanical principles such as centre-of-mass dynamics, ground reaction forces, and the “fall-and-catch” mechanism of gait, the session explains how a subtle lean from the ankle transforms posture into propulsion.

Building on Karen’s previous convention presentation on Spinal Engine Theory, which explored how rotation drives propulsion, this session introduces the complementary concept of the Gravity Lever—demonstrating how lean allows gravity to power the step.

The session includes a 45-minute lecture followed by a 60-minute practical workshop, providing instructors and trainers with clear insights, practical drills, and new ways to teach the power of lean.

PSYCHOLOGY & HUMAN BEHAVIOUR IN TEACHING

Hans Wrang, Human Behaviour and Positive Psychology Specialist, National Trainer, Australia

Understanding human behaviour is key to effective teaching and coaching. In this session we explore how principles from psychology and positive psychology can enhance the way you teach Nordic Walking and support participants in their learning journey.

Participants will discover simple, evidence-based approaches to understanding motivation, building confidence, and creating positive learning environments. The session will also explore why some people experience barriers or frustration when learning new skills and how communication strategies can support lasting behaviour change.

Whether you are new to coaching or an experienced instructor, you will leave with practical, easy-to-apply ideas that can improve your teaching and enhance the experience of your walkers.

LECTURE



EMPOWERING PHYSICAL LITERACY FOR LIFE

Katie Atkins, INWA Lead Children & Teens

Think back to your own journey with physical activity. When did you feel motivated and engaged—and when did you feel discouraged or disconnected? Every Nordic Walker arrives with their own experiences of movement, success, and challenge, which influence how they learn and progress.

Explore the pedagogy of Physical Literacy and how it can transform the way we teach Nordic Walking. Using behaviour change frameworks such as the COM-B model and Behaviour Change Wheel, alongside real-life case studies from children to older adults, participants will gain a deeper understanding of what drives lifelong engagement in movement.

Whether you are an instructor or national trainer, these sessions will provide practical strategies, exercises and new perspectives to support participant success and develop impactful programmes.

PRACTICAL

LECTURE



TESTING PHYSICAL COMPETENCE

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

We often talk about the powerful health benefits of Nordic Walking—but how often do we actually measure them? This engaging lecture and two-part practical workshop will explore how to assess and demonstrate the real impact of Nordic Walking on physical fitness.

You'll gain a clear understanding of why fitness testing matters, what to measure, and how to choose the most appropriate tests for different individuals and groups. In the lecture session, we will introduce key principles of fitness assessment and explore how to evaluate essential components such as strength, balance, agility, and cardiovascular fitness. We'll also discuss how testing can support goal setting, track progress, and enhance motivation.

The two practical workshops will bring this to life. You'll experience a range of simple, effective tests that can be easily integrated into your everyday Nordic Walking sessions. These accessible methods provide valuable insights into a walker's starting point and allow you to clearly demonstrate improvements over time.

LECTURE

PRACTICAL



THE KINETIC CHAIN BEHIND THE INWA 10 STEPS

Calvin Wong, INWA National Trainer of Hong Kong

An energizing exploration of how the INWA 10 Steps unlock the body's natural power. This session demonstrates how each step contributes to a seamless closed kinetic chain, where the spine becomes the central bridge linking lower-body stability with upper-body propulsion.

Through clear explanations and practical insights, participants will experience how cross-body force transfer creates rhythm, flow, and effortless forward motion. Perfect for anyone who wants to teach, coach, or practice Nordic Walking with deeper purpose and precision.



PRACTICAL

BUILDING BETTER BALANCE

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

Balance is a key physical quality that naturally declines with age—yet it plays a vital role in maintaining independence, confidence, and overall quality of life. Good balance supports efficient gait, body awareness, and coordination, while reducing the risk of falls that can lead to injury, long-term disability, or loss of independence.

Nordic Walking already provides a strong foundation for improving balance. In this practical workshop, we take it further—exploring how to combine Nordic Walking with targeted exercises to enhance stability even more effectively.

You will be introduced to a wide range of balance exercises that can be easily integrated into your sessions, along with adaptations to suit different ages, abilities, and physical conditions. We will also guide you in designing progressive “balance batteries”, helping you structure exercises from simple to more advanced, so you can confidently plan and deliver safe, effective sessions.

PRACTICAL



ADAPTING NORDIC WALKING FOR ALL PROGRESSION: REGRESSION: MODIFICATION

Natalia Palacios Samper | Karen Ingram | Katie Atkins

This practical session explores how to adapt and teach the INWA 10 Step Method to suit a wide range of participants. You will work through each step of the method, learning how to regress, progress, and modify techniques to support beginners, mixed-ability groups, and those with specific needs—without losing the integrity of the method.

A key focus will be on how to teach progression: breaking movements down, layering complexity, and knowing when and how to move individuals forward. This includes practical approaches to adapting drills, adjusting pace and coordination demands, and refining technique over time.

We will also explore how to progress and regress warm-ups and stretches within a Nordic Walking session—making them purposeful, accessible, and progressive. You'll practise offering options (easier to more challenging), adapting range of movement, balance, and load, and integrating these seamlessly into your teaching.

By the end of the session, you'll have a clear framework for delivering inclusive, progressive sessions using the INWA 10 Step Method, along with practical tools you can immediately apply in your own teaching.

PRACTICAL



CULTURAL & SOCIAL PROGRAMME

Nordic Walking Excursion – Lake Biwa & Historic Otsu

Step beyond the convention and experience a guided Nordic walk through scenic Otsu, along the shores of Lake Biwa. This 4.7 km route blends lakeside views, cultural heritage, and relaxed walking—perfect for refreshing body and mind while connecting with fellow participants.

Enjoy a gentle start by the water, pass the picturesque Hamaotsu Port, visit the historic Mii-dera Temple—founded over 1,300 years ago, known for its peaceful temple halls, ancient stone pathways, and celebrated bell, set among seasonal gardens that invite quiet reflection. Walk Along the Historic Tokaido Road, conclude your journey on a historic route once traveled by Edo-period wayfarers, where traditional townscapes still echo Japan's past.

Details:

Distance: 4.7 km

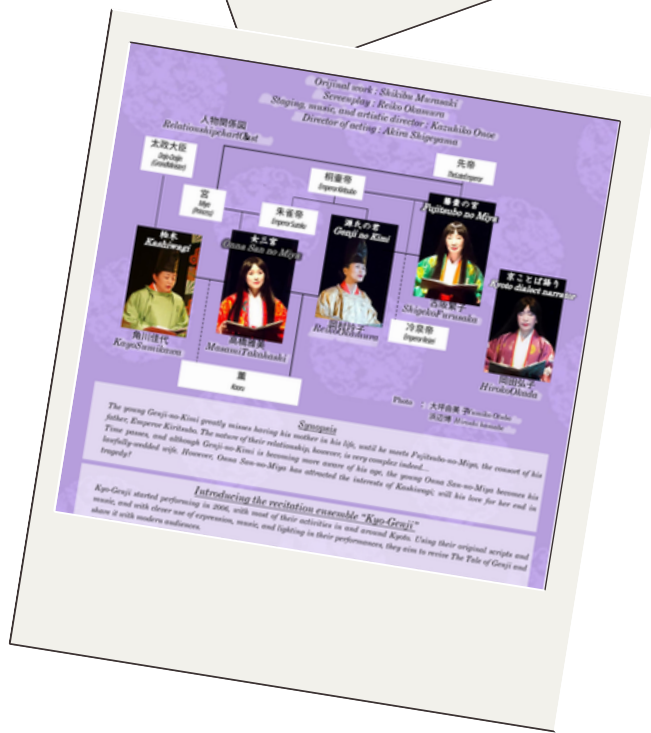
Duration: Approx. 1 hour + 20 min temple visit

Start Time: 14:00 | Weds 11 November



Performance by Kyoto Genji

A dramatic reading of *The Tale of Genji*, the world's oldest narrative work. This 20 minute show will be performed at the end of day 1 of the convention.



INWA is very grateful to JNFA for organising these cultural events.



€250 per person BOOKING LINK
FOR CONVENTION

Official Hotel:

Hotel Alpha One Otsu

<https://www.alpha-1.co.jp/otsu/>

Rooms from 8,000 JPY per person per night, to book please request a room booking form from the INWA office:

For more information please contact:
info@inwa-nordicwalking.com





