



## INWA CONVENTION REPORT 2023

The Latvian Nordic Walking Association warmly welcomed our members from around the world to the beautiful city of Riga for the 2023 convention.

Instructors, National Trainers, and NNWA members joined the INWA team for a full week of Nordic Walking. People travelled from Spain, Finland, The Netherlands, Greece, Switzerland, Estonia, Croatia, Poland, Japan, Hong Kong and the United Kingdom, to join our fellow Latvian Instructors.

We kicked off with a 3 day National Trainer course, followed by the INWA AGM, then 2 full days of the convention, finishing with a one day Race Official Training Course. Plus, many lovely social events, meals out and much fun and laughter.

Aki Karihtala, INWA president said, *"As always, it was great to see members of our INWA family from different countries. It goes without saying that the convention included a lot of laughter and great spirit. After the covid times it is wonderful to see each other face to face. And special mention about our members from Hong Kong. All that energy and excitement was tangible. I look forward to our next convention"*.

Here are the highlights:

### NATIONAL TRAINER COURSE

International Trainers Natalia Palacios Samper and Karen Ingram led delegates from Hong Kong and Poland in a 3 day course. Congratulations to Kennedy, Calvin and Paul for completing the course.



## AGM

This year the AGM was combined a face-to-face meeting with other members joining via zoom. Members joined the meeting from Latvia, Finland, Estonia, Netherlands, UK, Spain, Greece, Croatia, India, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and Costa Rica, participating 8 of them in Riga, and 7 of them on-line. There were a lot of constructive discussions to keep growing.

## THE CONVENTION



### PRACTICAL NORDIC WALKING SESSION WITH KAREN INGRAM

A group of 15 spent Thursday morning in the park learning new Nordic Walking skills, teaching tips, exercises, and games. We shared ideas and our love of Nordic Walking.

### 3 things we learnt

- ☐ New tips for teaching the 10 steps (Ok we know that's 10 things!)
- ☐ How to teach Nordic circuits
- ☐ How to improve technique using coaching language

### TEACHING CHILDREN, TEENS & YOUNG ADULTS WITH KATIE ATKINS

A fascinating lecture sharing Katie's NW curriculum for children with video testimonials woven throughout, followed by outdoor play time!



### 3 things we learnt

- ☐ Teach children in a way that matches their passions and interest at the age they are.
- ☐ Young children love to run, skip, jump and play so teach NW in this way.
- ☐ How to be a Nordic Frog!

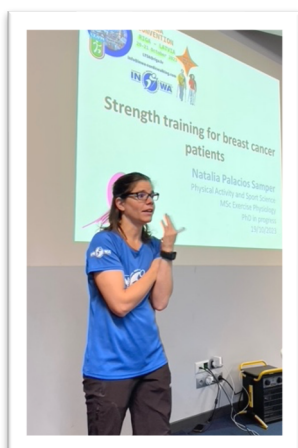
### SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY & NORDIC WALKING WITH KRISTAPS ZVEJNIEKS

To train a body we must first train the mind. Kristaps shared his professional experience of sports psychology and helped us see a bigger picture.

### 3 things we learnt

- ☐ Breakdown big goals into micro goals that are achievable and keep you motivated
- ☐ Stress reduces performance creating muscle tension, poor muscle recruitment and fatigue
- ☐ Don't try and eat a whole elephant!





## THE IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTH TRAINING FOR BREAST CANCER RECOVERY WITH NATALIA PALACIOS SAMPER

Natalia shared her wealth of knowledge in both delivering strength training to women with breast cancer and from her research.

### 3 things we learnt

- ☐ Strength training is crucial before, during and after treatment
- ☐ Exercise is medicine
- ☐ Nordic Walking together with strength training is a perfect combination in helping women recover from breast cancer

## HIGH INTENSITY INTERVAL TRAINING (4X4) WITH DR RUDOLFS CESEIKO

Rudolfs got us exploding out of our chairs and experiencing his approach to building strength and cardiovascular endurance. He shared his methods and research before we went outside for our very own HIIT Nordic Walking session, phew!

### 3 things we learnt

- ☐ If you want to build fitness, then combine resistance and endurance for best effect
- ☐ Do strength training at least 2 sessions a week
- ☐ A 4x4 HIIT Nordic Walking session gets you hot even in chilly Riga!



## WORKING WITH PEOPLE IN CHRONIC PAIN WITH KAREN INGRAM

Karen shared the modern science of pain and how you can use Nordic walking to deliver repeated positive movement experiences that help to rewire the brain and reduce pain.

### 3 things we learnt

- ☐ Pain is a feeling that is produced by the brain
- ☐ Pain is never a marker of tissue damage
- ☐ Hero Shrews have the strongest spines in the animal Kingdom! (you know you are going to google this!)



### NORDIC WALKING COMPETITION WITH NAOHIRO TAKAHASHI

INWA is developing an exciting world wide race concept that has already been successful in Japan, Poland, and Croatia. Nao's lecture was followed by a mini 1 km race, complete with times, race officials and red cards!

#### 3 things we learnt

- ☐ The INWA race committee have developed a really good system to make it easy for NNWA to host races
- ☐ Competing in a Nordic Walking race makes everyone smile
- ☐ INWA Nordic Walking Instructors become very competitive even when it is supposed to be a fun race!!!

### RACE OFFICIAL COURSE



To finish the week, on Saturday morning we had a Race Official Course where 8 people from 6 different countries participated. Latvia, Estonia, UK, Spain, Greece, and Hong Kong will have new race officials after completing the online part. It's time to spread NW competitions!

## What our members said:

We asked the convention delegates to share their ideas for future CPD courses and the next convention. This is what you said:

- ☐ More topics on special populations
- ☐ Can INWA conduct some studies of racing and its positive impact
- ☐ Strength training using Nordic Walking poles
- ☐ Could INWA run an online get together session, say 4 times a year, where National Trainers can chat, share, problem solve?
- ☐ Could INWA set up a closed Facebook group for National Trainers to join so we can share conversations, chat, problem solve etc.
- ☐ As well as competitive races can we explore inclusive events for people who want to complete challenges rather than race fast
- ☐ More Nordic Walking games like the ones we learnt in the morning session with Karen
- ☐ Sessions on marketing and business
- ☐ Tech tools we could all be using, like coaching software, AI, internet platforms
- ☐ Skills share – between us we have many differing areas of expertise. Could NNWA be invited to share some of these at the next convention. Each country to bring a convention topic.
- ☐ Nordic Walking and obesity
- ☐ Develop a database of drills that members can access

## The social side

Here are some photos to give a flavour of how we enjoyed each other's company, made new friends, caught up with old friends, and continued to build the INWA family. We enjoyed bowling (it got very competitive!!!), dinners together, a walking tour of Riga, a night time roof top experience 26 floors up and the gala dinner. Thank you to Galina and her team for organising such a lovely programme of events.



### **What the people who came thought of the convention...**

“To have the chance to come together and share areas of expertise and create new friendships has been an absolute joy. I have learned so much and feel new friendships have been forged. The laughter the camaraderie and just being in the same room with so many nationalities has been truly special. To belong to this international community means so much. Brilliant times on all fronts! Thank you so much. Looking forward to Finland 2024...”  
KATIE ATKINS, UK

“I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for welcoming us into your wonderful community. It has been an absolute pleasure to meet and connect with new friends from countries, as we embrace our unique backgrounds and discover the shared values and visions in Nordic Walking that bring us together. Nordic Walking has truly become a unifying force, enveloping us in love and joy, and sharing a common mission to make a better world. It is a remarkable experience that for being a part of. Each and every one of you holds a special place in my heart, and you will remain in my thoughts and prayers. Together, let us continue to grow and thrive as a united INWA family.”  
CALVIN WONG, HONG KONG

“Thank you everyone for the new experience and knowledge, for the new impressions and emotions, for the days spent together and the convention. A wonderful event”  
NATASHA REZNIKOVA, SWITZERLAND

“Looking back at the convention in Riga, I was touched by the enthusiasm of the participants to increase the knowledge of Nordic Walking”  
MARCO MAAS, THE NETHERLANDS

“Walking together evokes so many good feelings... and at the same time it gives meaning and resistance to the fast-paced life we live. Everything is easier together... Right? My time in Riga with so much positivity enriched me”.  
ANA ROGULJ, ESTONIA

“Warm friendships, so much energy for the future and enthusiasm from all of you, it gives a great feeling”  
BETTY VAN VEELLEN, THE NETHERLANDS

***And a final word from Hong Kong “One more, one more” ☺***

***SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!***