

WALKING POLE GUIDE

WALKING POLES

First the big question - one pole or two? **Trekking poles are generally designed to be used as a pair** as they will dramatically improve your walking comfort, stability, posture, and enhance walking rhythm and style. They will also reduce hip, knee, heel and ankle impact stresses. Single trekking poles perform more like a walking staff or stick, and are therefore ideal for easy terrain (prepared tracks and trails), or for specific situations (when you need a camera monopod). We have found that everyone who uses a pair of poles notices a significant improvement in their walking comfort, but this is not necessarily so for those who only use a single pole.

WHICH SORT OF POLE?

Shaft diameter — To decide which best suits you first consider your combined body and pack weight, if it is more than 90kg then you need a shaft 17mm wide or more. **However, you should also think about the sort of terrain and walk duration that you typically enjoy;** if you prefer rough terrain or encounter very rocky ground, or take expedition-style trips then the larger shaft size is preferable.

Positive Angle — Some models have a handle that is angled at 15° to the shaft, this leaves the wrist in a neutral position through the step and reduces the impact felt in the joint as you place the pole. This feature is ideal for those who have sensitive wrist joints, or if you are walking for long periods of time when repetitive impact may be an issue.

Antishock — This feature is especially useful if you are walking on hard ground like tarmac, concrete, stone paths or rocky terrain as it reduces impact stresses on the wrist joint and ligaments. On those models which offer Anti-shock you are able to turn on/off at will.

Locking System — There are two schools of thought regarding how to lock the different pole sections while in use. Leki have developed a twist-lock system that is easy to use with gloved hands and requires the mid and lower pole section to be of equal length. Black Diamond however, use a Flick-lock on the upper/mid shaft join and a fixed length ball-lock on the mid/lower join. This means that the only length adjustment can come from the mid section, but that the poles centre of gravity is lower which makes the swing motion of the pole easier on the wrist.

Grip Material — grips are made from three different materials; rubber, dense foam and a rubber/cork. If you walk predominantly in cold to cool conditions (alpine climates) and wear gloves for most of the time then rubber is an excellent grip. If you enjoy temperate climate walking in a variety of cold to warm conditions then a rubber/cork mix is ideal, and for cool to hot climates (temperate to tropical or desert) then a dense foam grip is more comfortable on the hand. Grips also come in two sizes, short for smaller hands and long for larger hands.



TREKKING POLE FEATURE OVERVIEW

Shock absorption of up to 30mm - can be turned off as required.

Shaft diameter to suit combined body and pack weight:

- If combined weight is below 90kg then 15mm diameter is suitable.
- If combined weight is above 90kg, then 17 or 8mm diameter is preferred.

Wrist sling to spread any shock across the wrist joint and forearm.

A 'positive angle' to leave the wrist and forearm in a 'neutral' position to both reduce joint-shock and improve walking style.

Flexible carbide tip will prevent damage to lower shaft if it becomes stuck in rocks or cracks.

Interchangeable baskets to suit terrain.

- Larger baskets for snow or very soft ground.
- Smaller baskets for muddy or spongy ground.

Grips are made from 3 different materials:

- **Rubber** - suitable for cold climates when wearing gloves but can cause callouses.
- **Rubber/Cork blend** - ideal for temperate climates when you may want to wear gloves but will also be in warm to hot conditions.
- **Foam rubber** - ideal for warm to hot climates, but can feel cold when wet.

BRAND	MODEL	UPPER SHAFT DIAMETER	"POLE LENGTH (WHILE JOINED)"	WEIGHT	IDEAL BODY + PACK WEIGHT	SHOCK ABSORPTION	15° POSITIVE ANGLE	GRIP
LEKI	Makalu Ultralite Antishock Cortec 2138	15mm	67 to 135cm	"Pair - 608g Single - 304g"	less than 90kg	YES	NO	Rubber/ Cork
LEKI	Makalu Ultralite Antishock Positive Angle Cortec 2173	15mm	67 to 135cm	"Pair - 534g Single - 267g"	less than 90kg	YES	YES	Rubber/ Cork
LEKI	Makalu Ultralite Antishock Positive Angle AirErgo 2148	15mm	76 to 135cm	"Pair - 534g Single - 267g"	less than 90kg	YES	YES	Dense Foam
LEKI	Super Makalu Antishock Positive Angle AirErgo 2039	17mm	80 to 140cm	"Pair - 556g Single - 278g"	less than 140kg	YES	YES	Dense Foam
LEKI	Super Makalu Antishock Cortec Positive Angle 2038	17mm	80 to 140cm	"Pair - 604g Single - 302g"	less than 140kg	YES	YES	Rubber/ Cork
LEKI	Super Makalu Antishock Positive Angle 2034	17mm	80 to 140cm	"Pair - 620g Single - 310g"	less than 140kg	YES	YES	Rubber
BLACK DIAMOND	Gradient Trekking Pole	18mm	66 to 145cm	"Pair - 624g Single - 312g"	less than 160kg	NO	NO	Rubber/ Cork
BLACK DIAMOND	Contour Trekking Pole	18mm	70 to 145cm	"Pair - 510g Single - 205g"	less than 160kg	NO	YES	Dense Foam
BLACK DIAMOND	Terra CF Trekking Pole	18mm	70 to 140cm	"Pair - 540g Single - 270g"	less than 160kg	MARGINAL	YES	Dense Foam

TIP When travelling take your poles completely apart to both minimise packing volume and to ensure that all components are clean and undamaged.