

# What is Volksmarching?

A volksmarch is a noncompetitive 3.1 mile (5 km) or 6.2 mile (10 km) walk. It's not a pledge walk, it's not a race, it is a fun activity you do with a club, with your family, with your pet, or all by yourself. Volksmarching got its name from its origins in Europe. Today there are thousands of volkssport clubs around the world, allied in the [International Volkssport Federation](#), the IVV.

## IVV LOGO



## VOLKSSPORTING TERMS DEFINED

**Volkssport** - a noun or verb. The noun meaning a group of "people's" sports that include walking, swimming, skiing, snow shoeing, and biking (and occasionally roller-skating). The verb means to participate in those sports - ex. volkssport Washington state.

**Volkssporting** - a noun or verb. Same definition as above.

**Volkssporter** - A person who participates in Volkssporting events.

**Volksmarch** - a walking event. Also termed volkswalk. In Germany, these events were originally termed Volkswanderung - "volkswandering." Reportedly this was difficult for American military stationed in Germany to understand and so they started using the term Volksmarsch. It evolved into Volksmarch in the United States. Those feeling that the term was too foreign, coined the word - Volkswalk.

**IVV - Internationaler Volkssport Verband** - This is the international parent organization which is headquartered in Germany. Many nations have chapters. Our AVA is one of the chapters of these "International Popular Sports Clubs." The AVA pays dues to the IVV, we have adopted their awards program, we have a vote as a member nation, etc. Volkssporters who travel to other countries will notice that our Distance and Event books are the same size and color, the award patch, pin and certificates are the same, etc.

**AVA - American Volkssport Association** - This is our national organization. Fees are paid to keep our national organization going in support of the member clubs. The AVA heads up nation-wide programs and processes our awards for us. Our officers are all volunteers.

**IVV Awards Program** - just like in Europe, you can record the number of events you participate in and the number of km you walk, ski or bike in record books. These books, available at most organized events for \$5.00 each are the way you become involved in our international awards program and give yourself an incentive to participate in events. When you begin, you will want both the green book (event record) and blue book (distance record). The directions for the program are on the books. Normally when first starting out, sold as a **New Walkers Program Packet**. As you complete certain milestones, the first distance one is 500 km and the first event one is 10 events, you send them in to the national office in Texas. Normally it will take about 2 - 3 weeks for processing. By return mail, you will receive a patch, pin and certificate indicating the award that you have earned. You will also receive a "IVV Record of Achievement" passbook when you send in your first book for processing. It is used to record the event and distance milestones you have accomplished. Once you purchase a book there is no additional charge to you for the patch, pin and certificate upon completion. Each next level book you purchase from a club will be \$5.00, or if ordering from AVA Headquarters direct cost will be \$6.50 (includes \$1.50 shipping and handling).

**Credit** - This is the entry of a validation imprint (stamp) into the event and distance record books you keep. It shows your progress toward reaching the various levels of event and distance awards. Everyone gets excited as a book is nearly filled up! The validation imprint shows the event sanction number and can only be given on the day of the event. IVV rules allow it only to be stamped in the official record books. If you forget to bring your record books to an event, you have the choice of buying a new book as you eventually will need one! Or if an *Insert Card* is available, you may use one, however, please do not cut or paste into the official record books.

**Credit Only** - When you register for an event, either in advance by mail (pre-registration), or in person at the Registration table, you can ask for a Credit only, or Award. Credit only means that you want the validation imprint (event stamp) only, no award. If an award is offered at the event, and you register and pay for the award, the credit is included in the price. For example, an event may offer the following schedule of fees:

A Award (includes credit) = \$6.00 (\$6 is with most A Awards; at times clubs have special A Awards that exceed this cost which will be outlined in the walk brochure)

B Award (includes credit) = \$4.00

Credit Only = \$3.00

**Ks - Kilometers** (1 km = .6 mile) - Many people refer to walking distance as "getting in their K's." A standard 10km event or a shorter 5km may be offered. Some events may be longer.

**A Medal or A Award** - This term was started in Germany. Most of the awards were originally medallions. The A medal is the medal that is the award for the current event. Awards must have the initials AVA/IVV and year affixed permanently to it.

**B Medal or B Award** - This is last years or previous year's awards. Usually you can earn these awards at a reduced price. The key to remember is that you must earn these awards even though they are from prior events. Oddly enough, sometimes a

patch or cup is referred to as the "B-medal." This is a remnant from the German terminology.

**Start/finish** - This is where the registration and finish area of the volkssporting event is housed. When you arrive for an event, look for the "start" or "start/finish." This is where you register for the volkssporting event. Quite often refreshments are sold, specialties are available and information on upcoming events is spread out on tables. It's a great place for socializing!

**Pre-registration table** - This table is where you go if you sent in your registration fees early. Some flyers indicate that you can register by mail. After picking up your "start-card", you go to the next step.

**Registration table** - This is the table at which you pay your credit only or award fees, pick up a "start card", put your name and address on the card and then move to the next step.

**Start number or Start table** - this is where the club numbers your card. It helps them keep track of the number of volkssporters out on the trail. It is important for you to stop at this table to help the club with their record-keeping and often it is the place where maps and directions are given out. Not all events have a start table, but it is wise to ask if there is one.

**Checkpoint** - These are strategically placed points along the route where you must pause to have your *start card* stamped, punched or sometimes, you need to write something on it. This is proof that you have passed along the route. During organized events, water and, often, sweets are offered at the checkpoint. Ideally, a restroom is available. Recent events have had checkpoints located in coffee shops, fast-food restaurants, etc. and so the checkpoint can be a real rest stop! Food is most often available at the Start/Finish point.

**Finish** - this is the table where you go when you have completed the route. If you have IVV books (which you should) you will present your *start card*, and if you have paid for credit only or for the Award, you will get your book(s) stamped. You can only earn the stamp on the day of the event, so if you forget your books, don't expect to come to the next event and get them stamped! If there is an award, and if you have paid the fee, you will be given your award at the finish table. If the awards have not yet arrived, or the club has run out of awards, they will ask you to sign a list with your name and address so that they can mail your award to you.

**Information table** - this is where you should go after you finish the event. Brochures from upcoming events, trip ads and specialty ads are put here for you to browse and take home.

**TAW - The American Wanderer** - This is our national volkssporting publication. It is sometimes referred to as the "TAW". It contains event listings nation-wide, articles and pictures. You can subscribe by becoming an Associate Member. This is a program which supports our organization and gives you the TAW and some member discounts.

**Regional Director** - In the US, groups of states are assigned an elected volunteer Regional Director who serves as a liaison with the AVA and the clubs in his/her region and assists in guiding the AVA as a member of the Executive Council.

**State and Country Bars** - Volkssporters like to collect and record everything. The AVA and IVV countries sell small metal bars (about 1 inch + long) to sell to those who have participated in volkssporting events in other states and countries. They have two holes drilled at the top and bottom to allow for linking them into an impressive chain of bars. To start your collection, buy a "header pin" and your own state. Link them together (needle-nosed pliers help) and start your travels! Place your order by contacting AVA National Headquarters.

**50 Staters** - These are people who are in the process of or have completed volkssporting events in all 50 US States. When you complete this feat, it is cause for celebrating! Be sure and tell your club about it. The AVA has a Walking the United States book (50 States/51 Capitals) to keep track of your accomplishments and upon completion you can get a certificate and other goodies. Visit our Events - Current Special Programs link.

**Convention** - The AVA holds a biennial convention every 2 years, on an odd year. Volkssporters will gather from near and far for a week of events, education, socials and meetings. These conventions are a tremendous amount of fun - drawing over 1,000 people. The convention will also need a tremendous amount of volunteer time... so, get involved!!