

HOW I GOT THIS BODY LINDA LEMKE, 56, WAYZATA, NORDIC WALKER



KYNDELL HARKNESS • kharkness@startribune.com

Linda Lemke, left, looked over at the lake while her sister-in-law, Gail Menke, checked out the trail behind them during their Nordic walk on the trail near the twin towers of the Carlson Center.

Nordic walker greets the day

First things first I've been a fitness walker for 24 years; it's been my chosen activity to do on a daily basis for overall health. My sister-in-law lives next door and we get up at 5:30 a.m. and walk 12 months a year, four to five days a week. We've always said that time was a time that nobody else wanted. I kind of got hooked. **Four years ago she added poles** The easiest way to describe [Nordic walking] is it's the simple addition of a specially designed pole to your fitness walk. You use that pole with a very natural arm swing; you don't change the way you're walking. That pole creates some resistance against the ground with every step, so that's where the upper body workout comes in. **Poles provide** Nordic walking is less stressful on your joints because the pole accepts some of the strike force of the heels. It's great for heart health because you get your heart up 10 to 12 beats a minute faster than if you're just walking. It's really good for posture because as soon as you start walking with the poles you stand up straighter, so it's strengthening those upper back muscles and you stand straighter in everyday life. Because you're moving your whole body you'll burn about 20 percent more calories [than without poles]. **Around town** We have six routes we do right outside our door. Also with Hoigaards [where Lemke works] we have our Nordic walking Tuesdays. We meet at different spots in the Twin Cities and walk around lakes and regional parks and the arboretum. **Great outdoors for great health** We try to eat real simple and as much organic and local as we can. I make sure that I'm outside every day — I think that kind of sparks something in me, and it keeps me active. At one point at church we had a Native American leader come in and he was talking about time and the flow of your day and he talked about the importance of starting each day by going outside and greeting the day. I try to make sure I do that even if it's not a day that I'm going to walk. I at least step outside and greet the day and be a part of that morning coming up.

See www.leki.com to learn more about Nordic walking and www.hoigaards.com for information on the Hoigaards Tuesday evening walks.

SARAH MORAN

CONTACT US If you or someone you know would be a good candidate for "How I Got This Body," e-mail us at body@startribune.com and include your name, age, contact information and an explanation of your fitness story.