NWANA ACADEMY

Nordic Walking Instructor Beginner Level Certification

Role and Responsibilities of a Beginner-Level Instructor

Study materials for Lesson 1.4, Role and Responsibilities of a Beginner-Level Instructor

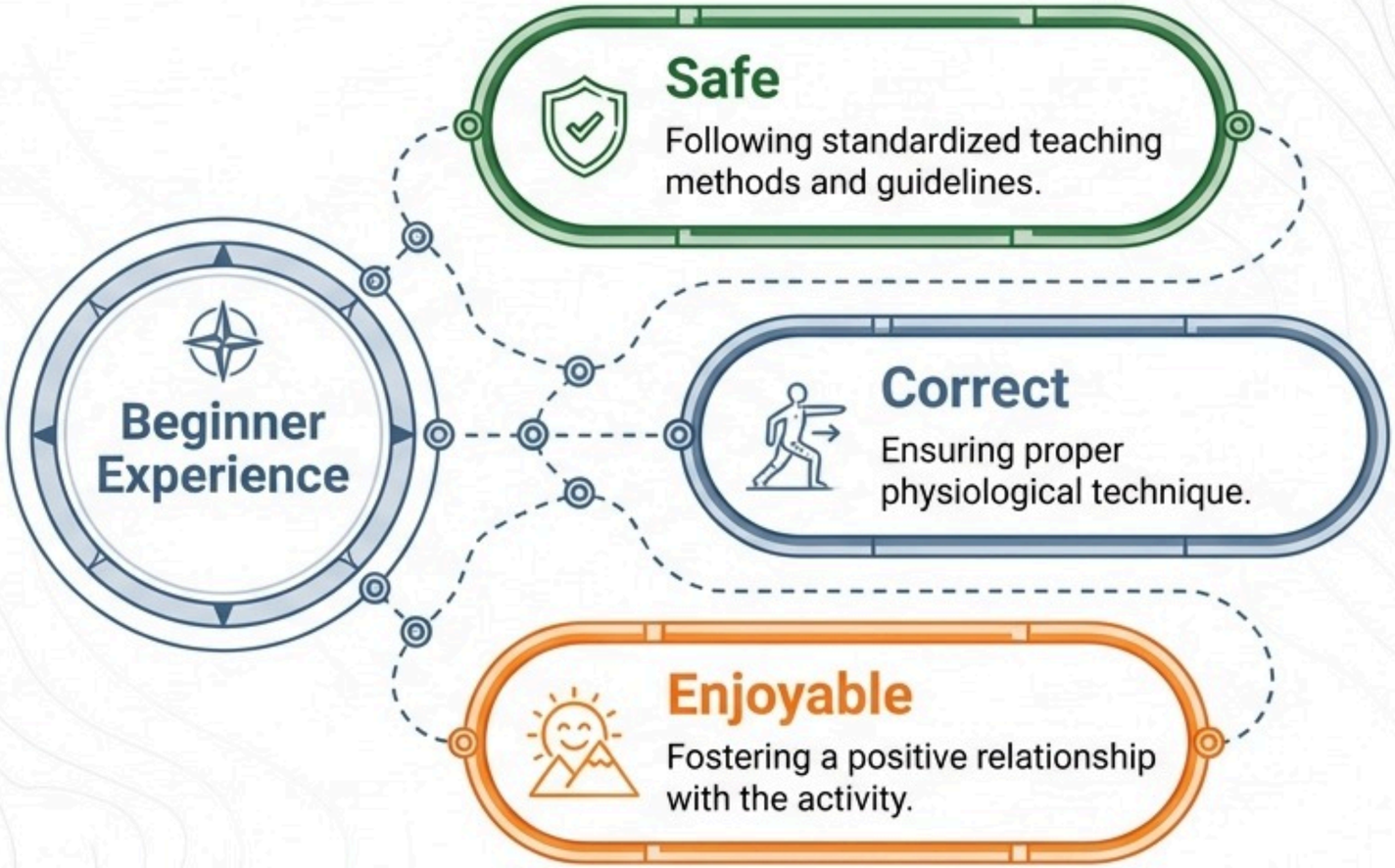
North American Nordic Walking Association (NWANA)



The Foundation Blueprint

Core Competencies of a Beginner Nordic Walking Instructor

The Foundational Role Introduces New Participants to the Sport



The instructor's primary responsibility is to ensure safe, correct, and enjoyable learning experiences while following standardized teaching methods and professional guidelines.

The Four Pillars of Foundational Instruction



The Step-by-Step Progression of the Training System

1

Natural Gait Fundamentals

Focuses on natural walking mechanics without poles.

2

Basic Pole Handling

Introduces grip, straps, and holding poles correctly.

3

Proper Pole Positioning

Teaches the correct angle and plant location relative to the stride.

4

Coordinated Arm–Leg Movement

Syncs arm swing and leg movement with pole planting.

5

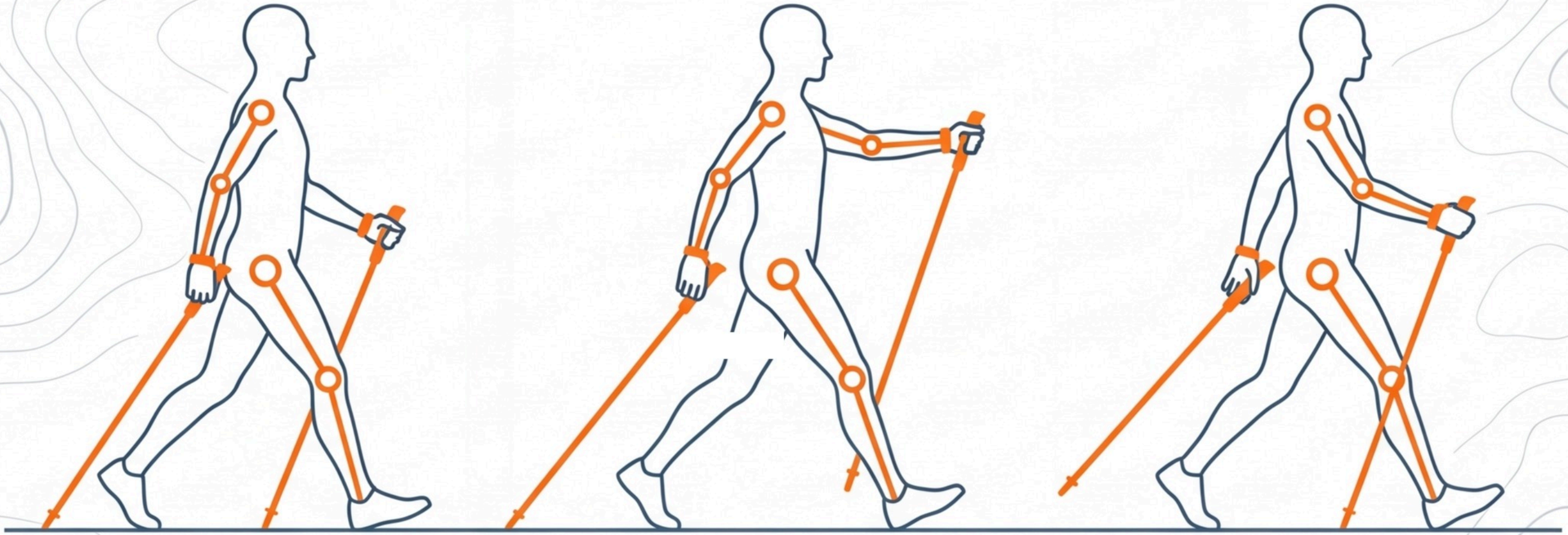
First Elements of the Push Phase

Initiates the power generation from the poles.

All teaching must strictly follow this progressive sequence to build confidence and technique safely.

NotebookLM

Demonstrations Must Be Designed for Imitation



Slow	Clear	Accurate
Move at a speed a beginner can visually track.	Exaggerate the core mechanics slightly for visibility.	Reflect safe and technically perfect Nordic Walking.

Provide demonstrations that beginners can easily imitate.

NotebookLM

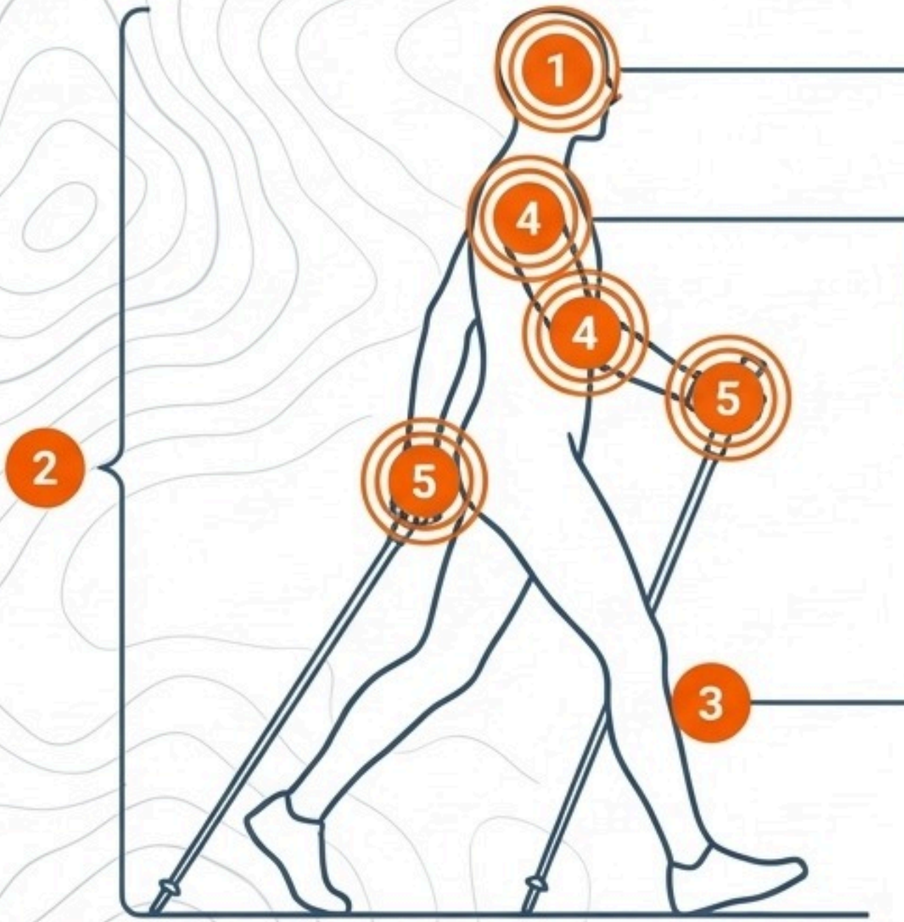
Distill Complex Movements into Simple Cues



Beginners learn best when instructions are simple and heavily focused on a single actionable change.

One Correction at a Time

The Observation Body Map Identifies Core Beginner Errors



Posture

Heads down, looking at feet. Curved back or hunched shoulders. Leaning too far forward.

Rhythm

Inconsistent timing. Arm and leg movements not synchronized (e.g., same side forward).

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Arm Swing

Short, timid arm movement. Elbows bent excessively. Pushing from the shoulder, not the whole arm.

Pole Angle

Poles planted vertically or in front of the body. Incorrect angle for forward propulsion.

Hand Release

Death grip on the pole. Failure to open the hand and release the grip during the backswing.

Gentle, constructive feedback only. Advanced corrections are outside the responsibility of this level.

The Pre-Session Radar Sweeps for Four Risk Factors

Equipment
Appropriate and safely adjusted poles.

Terrain
Suitable and safe for beginner navigation.

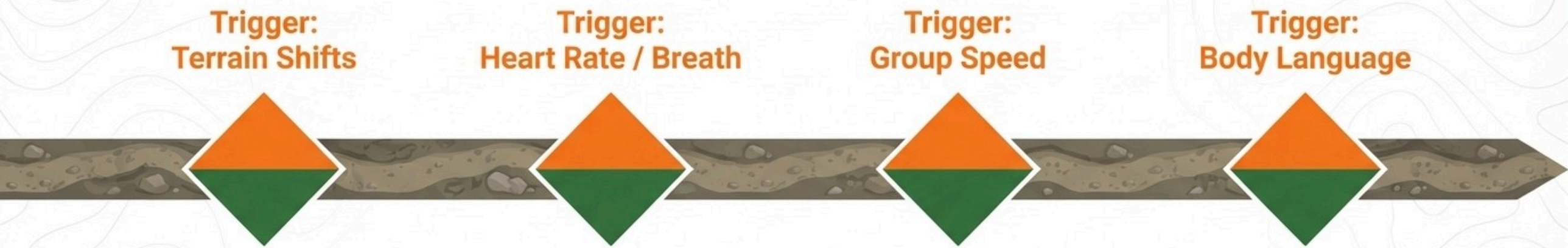


Weather
Conditions allow for safe participation.

Human Factor
Participant spacing is adequate.

Safety must be systematically verified before stepping onto the trail and **monitored** throughout the entire session.

Active Risk Management Requires Constant Adaptation



Trigger: Terrain Shifts

Action: Avoid unsafe terrain.

Trigger: Heart Rate / Breath

Action: Prevent excessive intensity.

Trigger: Group Speed

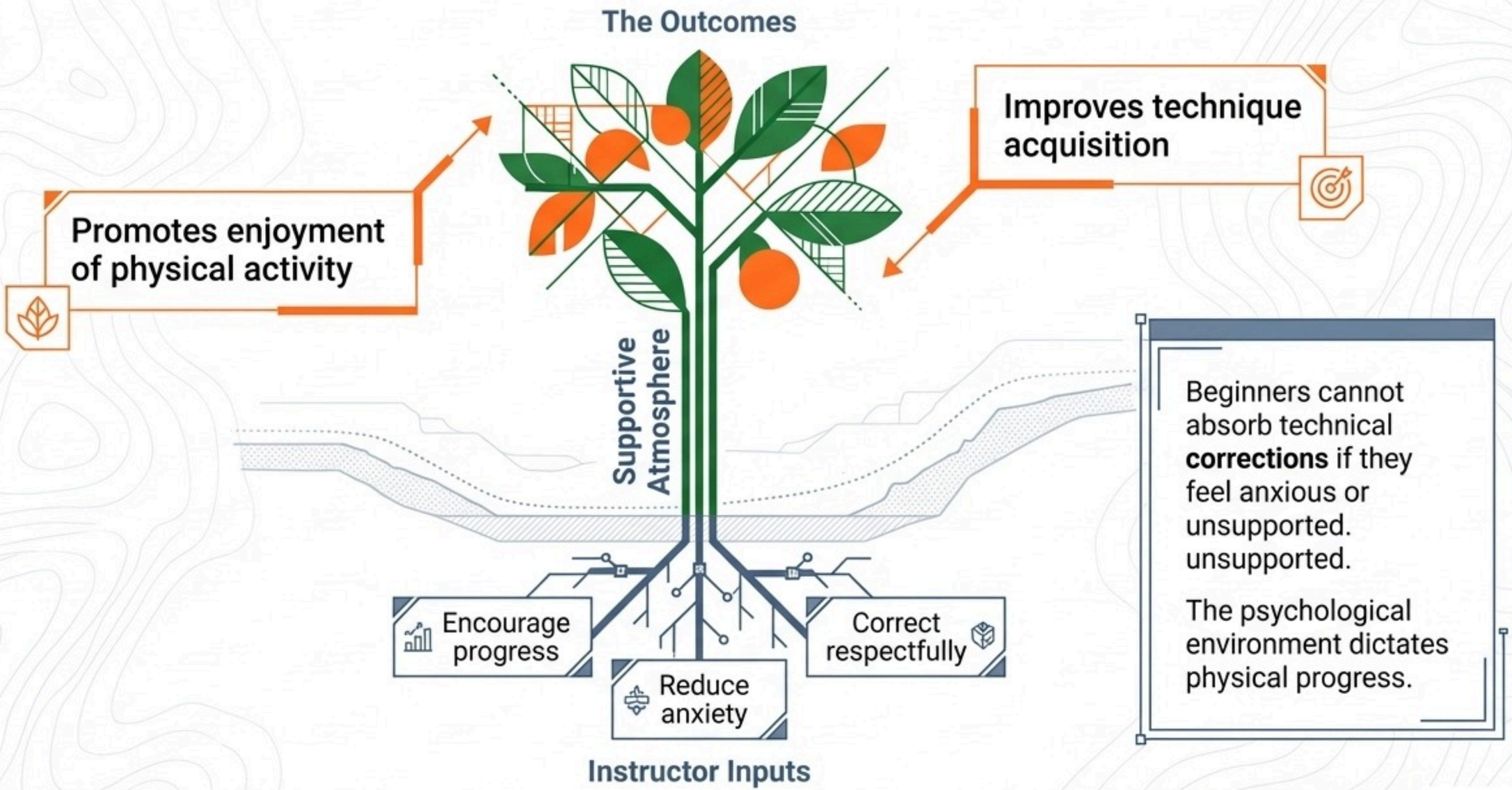
Action: Adapt pace to participant fitness.

Trigger: Body Language

Action: Recognize signs of discomfort or fatigue.

Rule: Any potential issue must be addressed immediately.

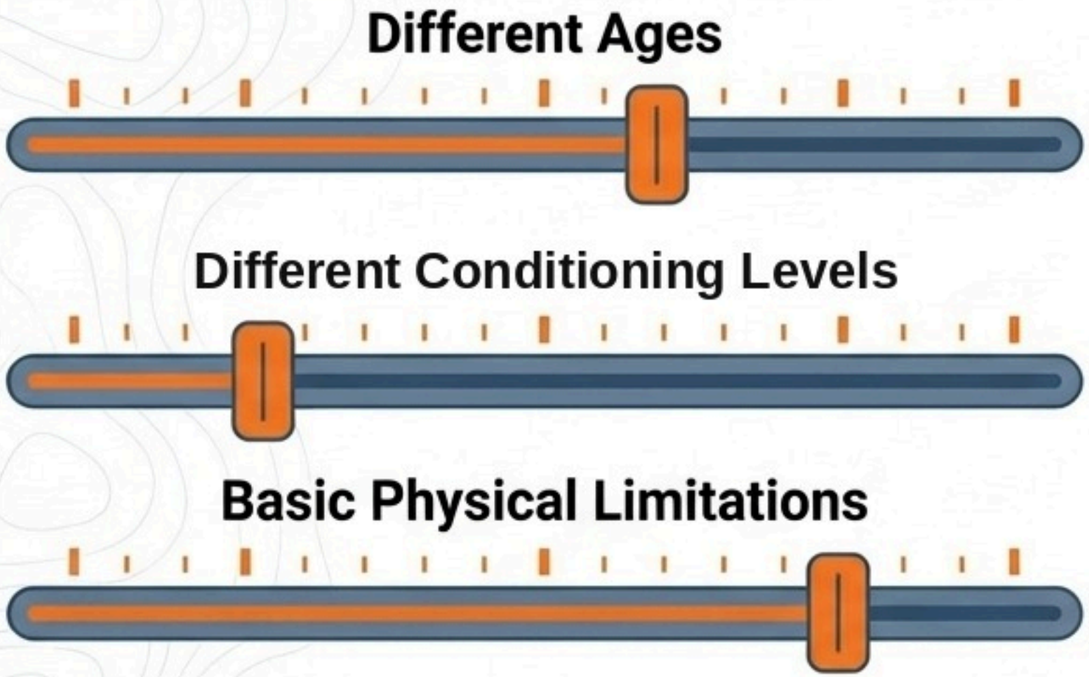
Engineer a Positive Learning Ecosystem



Beginners cannot absorb technical **corrections** if they feel anxious or unsupported. unsupported.

The psychological environment dictates physical progress.

Calibrate for the Mixed Group Challenge



Monitor Basic Progress

- ☑ Correct posture
- ☑ Coordinated movements
- ☑ Confidence in using poles

Adaptation is required, but it must strictly stay within beginner-level methods.

The Standards of Professional Conduct



The Scope of Practice Determines Operational Boundaries

In Bounds

- Teach introductory Nordic Walking classes
- Work with general recreation groups
- Deliver basic technique sessions

Out of Bounds

- Teach advanced technique
- Provide athletic training plans
- Diagnose injuries
- Conduct performance testing
- Certify other instructors

Working outside the certified scope is strictly prohibited.

The Complete Beginner Instructor Ecosystem

Teaching
Technique execution

Safety
Risk management



Management
Supportive environment

Professionalism
NWANA standards and scope

Mastery at the beginner level isn't just knowing the technique; it's balancing instruction, safety, environment, and professional boundaries simultaneously.

Master the Foundation to Prepare for the Future



Summary Checklist

- Teach foundational technique
- Ensure safety
- Create a positive environment
- Manage diverse groups
- Maintain professionalism
- Work strictly within scope

These responsibilities form the basis of your work as an instructor and prepare you for more advanced levels of certification.