

# American Volkssport Association



Fun...Fitness...Friendship

[www.ava.org](http://www.ava.org)

## **Welcome to the American Volkssport Association (AVA), America's premier noncompetitive sports organization!**

Founded in 1976, the AVA is an educational nonprofit 501 (c)(3) corporation, dedicated to promoting fun, fitness and friendship.



### **What is Volkssporting?**

***Fun, Fitness, Friendship***

Volkssporting started in Germany and simply defined, is a personal fitness sports and recreation program offering noncompetitive walks, hikes, bike rides, swims, and in some regions cross-country skiing. You may choose your time to start within the start/finish "window" and participate in the sport at your own pace.

Volkssporting in the United States is sponsored by the American Volkssport Association (AVA) which has about 300 active clubs presenting more than 3,000 volkssporting events each year with some 50,000 participants.

Promoting well being and good health by providing safe exercise in a stress-free environment is the hallmark of volkssporting. Walking – also called "volksmarching" – is the most popular of all the volkssporting activities. Walks are generally 10 km (6.2 miles) in length and the routes are marked or guided by a leader. Local clubs generally offer a 5 km (3.1 miles) option for participants who are physically or medically unable to complete the longer walks. All events are noncompetitive. The volkssporter chooses the sport, the distance and the pace.

Volkssporting events take place throughout the year, all around the country. Historic and scenic sites are selected for their enjoyment. Trails are carefully laid out and marked, easy to follow directions or maps are provided. Ratings of 1 to 5 (the most difficult) are given to trails based upon the challenge the trail presents. The designated Start Point is open for several hours to allow you to begin your volkssporting adventure at your leisure. Trails have checkpoints along the route and are monitored for security and safety.

In the volkssporting tradition, you frequently find volkssporters gathered at the Finish Point where they take time to enjoy friends, and at some events, entertainment or refreshments.

Open to everyone, local club or national membership is optional, but highly recommended. Most participants do take part in the low-cost International Achievement Awards Program or receive the special award for an event. That adds to the fun of accomplishment.

Join the AVA today! Go to the [www.ava.org](http://www.ava.org) homepage and use the membership link.

## Over 50,000 Volkssporters.....

More than 50,000 Americans participate in AVA's achievement program by purchasing record books to record their progress. The AVA boasts active members in every state.



Many people adopt volkssporting as part of their lifestyle, and have completed hundreds of events, and thousands of kilometers. While

most begin walking for fitness (that inevitable medical "wake-up call"), most continue because of friendships and social benefits.

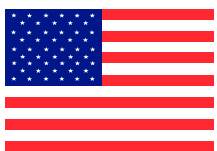
## The Volkssporter Profile



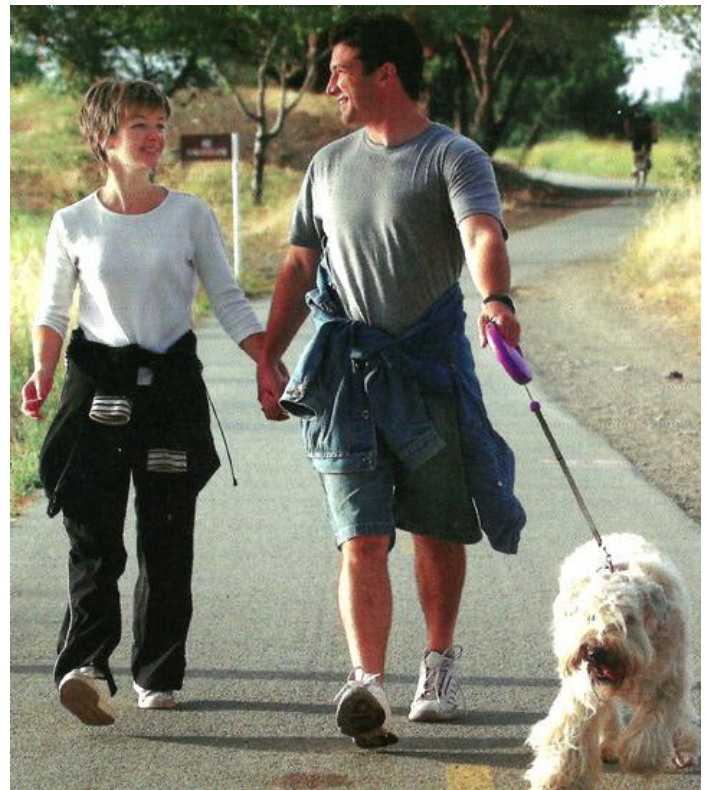
The average volkssporter is a "baby boomer," in his or her mid-fifties, and usually an "empty-nester" either approaching or beginning retirement.

The ratio of female to male participants is about 60%-40%. Approximately 25,000 volkssporters are members of local clubs, with thousands more regular participants who do not belong to a club.

It is not uncommon to find two or three generations at AVA events. Adults with children participate as a family while young adults enjoy more extreme hikes and longer distances.



*Fun, Fitness, Friendship*



## Coast-to-Coast Events

With more than 3,000 events per year, about 1,200 events are 'live', with many participants coming together over a delightful family weekend.

About 1,850 events are self-guided and open every day of the year. AVA's **Starting Point** is an annual directory of these events published and sold by AVA.

All AVA events are listed at AVA's website at [www.ava.org](http://www.ava.org) (Locate Walking Events link.) AVA's largest events routinely attract thousands of people.

Biennially, the AVA hosts a week-long National Convention, which Volkssporters from all over the world attend.

## Sponsor Benefits at Events

- Ability to "reach out and touch" participants for several hours
- Showcase products
- Exposure to lucrative senior target market
- Increase brand loyalty
- Create product awareness
- Drive retail