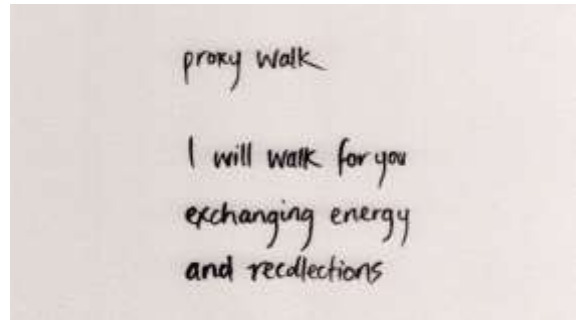


## Proxy Walks – walking for others

The full spectrum of walking and walking abilities includes 'limited walking' and 'not walking'.

Losing the ability to walk might be due to age, disability, or chronic illness. It will have been a feature of life for some since birth. Long covid has impacted 2.3 million people in the UK, restricting walking abilities and creating new limits in life-changing ways for many.



Artist [Alec Finlay](#) has been exploring how walking for others has become an invaluable lifeline for many living with chronic health conditions:

***"It's only in losing their freedom to walk that people realise what walking meant to them."***

[A recent blog](#) by Alec describes the first Proxy Walk, and explains some of the thinking behind it.

### What's a Proxy Walk?

"The idea is that someone, anyone, will make a walk in a place for someone else, bringing back a description of it", says Alec. "It's a very simple idea, but also very powerful, because it returns the idea of belonging in the world, on or a hill, to someone who feels they can't."

Make a walk, in a place, for someone else.

### Who can do a Proxy Walk? Who for?

Friends of the Award supports young people, volunteers and staff to do them, for people they know (or maybe not).

It might be for a housebound relative. For someone who's ill, hospitalised, or less mobile than they used to be. For a resident in an old folks' home.

They may have special memories of a particular place. Or just appreciate sharing in a walking experience.

### How can you do a Proxy Walk?

Think of someone who will appreciate the gift of a walk.

Take a photo. Think of some suitable words. It might be a short text, or something creative.

Share it with them. In person, or by text, email, WhatsApp...Or even a good old postcard or letter.



At Friends of the Award we're exploring Proxy Walks as part of nature-based youth awards. DofE Expeditions and the John Muir Award Share Challenge offer great tie-ins, for example. We're using opportunities as they arise in our Open Programme, in 1:1 Mental Health support work, in schools and youth club settings.

We'll collect and share Proxy Walks throughout 2023.

Let us know about yours, [admin@fota.org.uk](mailto:admin@fota.org.uk), #ProxyWalks.

Join us in walking for someone who'll appreciate it.

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