

Top Christchurch Walk: Godley Head Coastal Walk

Recently upgraded by the Department of Conservation, the Godley Head Coastal Walk follows the coastline from Taylors Mistake Beach before climbing to the Godley Head car park. As well as being a superb walk, close to the city, this well-surfaced track is a great run.

The views change along the track from the surfing action of Taylors Mistake against the backdrop of rugged Whitewash Head to panoramic views of Pegasus Bay stretching to the Kaikoura mountains and the hills of North Canterbury. From Godley Head, the route's eastern extremity, Lyttelton Harbour, the north face of Banks Peninsula, and the expanse of the Pacific Ocean come into sight. The World War II military installations on Godley Head are an added attraction.

Occasionally, dolphins and whales can be seen in the sheltered waters of this picturesque bay and popular surf beach. Penguins are encountered at some times of the year as nest along the rocky shoreline.

From the car park at Taylors Mistake, take the track next to the DoC sign on the southern side of the bay, go past the line of baches, climb and follow the sea cliff to Boulder Bay where another bevy of baches sits.

The track then climbs to the Godley Head historic area, a World War II coastal defence battery with gun emplacements, old military buildings and tunnels. About 120 metres above the sea, this site is ranked as one of NZ's top 10 coastal defence heritage sites. Many of the interesting features, such as the disappearing guns and underground storage rooms, are closed for repair work, but the track goes close by.

From the Godley Head car park, return the same way, or walk about 2km either along the track just below the road back towards Evans Pass, or up and over the spur back to Breezes Col. From the col, start down the Anaconda Bike Track, but be aware of exuberant downhill mountain bikers, who have right of way on this section. About 10 minutes from Breezes Col, take the four-wheel-drive track on your right that drops off the bike track, past a power pole, back on to the Godley Head Coastal Walk track and follow it back to Taylors Mistake.

It is OK to take dogs but only on leashes, as the walk passes through grazing paddocks.

Time: 3 hour round trip

Distance: 7km

Starting Point: Taylors Mistake car park

Difficulty: Easy to Godley Head, loop track medium.

Highlights: Coastal cliffs, WWII defence battery with gun emplacements.



Dramatic coastal cliffs are the view on the Godley Head Coastal Walk.
Photo: Mark Pickering