



PACIFIC NORTHWEST
PARKOUR
ASSOCIATION

Parkour Information

introduction :: What is Parkour?

The essence of Parkour can be stated simply: it is the art of **overcoming obstacles** as swiftly and efficiently as possible using only your body. The fundamentals include running, jumping, and climbing, and we build on these fundamentals to improve our ability to pass over, under, around and through obstacles with more complex movements.

Parkour is a system of fitness training that improves strength, speed, agility, coordination, stamina, endurance, and precision. It offers a full-body workout at any level of experience, and improves your ability to move, to harness your confidence, to change how you see the world. Parkour practitioners are called "traceurs".

Where most people see walls and divisions, traceurs see opportunities for overcoming obstacles and barriers both physical and mental.
– Seattle PI, 12.19.2005

about us :: What is the PNWPA?

The Pacific Northwest Parkour Association (PNWPA) is a not-for-profit corporation based in Washington state. We comprise a diverse group of individuals for whom Parkour is an important part of life, and who care about its future. Our charter is, foremost, to teach the safe and effective practice of Parkour in our community, and to connect traceurs (Parkour practitioners) in the region and across the world.

The PNWPA was formed to collaborate with other communities and organizations to promote accurate instruction and portrayal of Parkour while encouraging a fit, healthy, and confident lifestyle. We are students, teachers, and professionals in various trades, all of whom have benefited from the practice of Parkour and want to share our knowledge with, and learn from, others. The PNWPA also seeks to provide service opportunities for giving back to the community.

We believe that fitness should not only be physically demanding, but should challenge us intellectually, put us in touch with our environment, and expand our understanding of ourselves. Through Parkour we hope to help children and adults connect with their innate love of movement, connect with their surroundings and experience the full potential of what their bodies have evolved to do.

FAQ :: Basics

What is a typical Parkour training session?

Training for Parkour can involve anything from an in-depth instructor-led clinic, to a relaxed group event in a public area (what we call jams), to simply balancing on a curb outside your house. In fact, the adaptable nature of Parkour tends to make every training session a unique experience, with new challenges to overcome and new movements to learn every day. This is because Parkour is not about doing one type of exercise over and over like most gym sessions or workout routines, but rather increasing your overall ability to move over, under, around or through every type of obstacle you find. In one small area that may involve learning how to vault railings, swing through confined spaces, and balance on small objects. In another this could mean learning to climb trees, jump creeks, and quickly scale small walls. The possibilities for training are endless, and there is always more to learn.

Is Parkour dangerous?

Maybe you've seen videos of people leaping from rooftop to rooftop, or doing backflips off of bridges, and concluded that Parkour is a sport for daredevils. We are frequently asked by parents and other concerned people whether Parkour is a dangerous activity that will result in people being seriously injured. The answer is that like any sport, Parkour can be dangerous if proper safety precautions are not taken. If you are not an expert, the things you've seen in the movies and online are extremely dangerous. They are also *not* what most traceurs do when they practice Parkour.



PIRATE (Moses Lake, WA)

Parkour does involve moving through the natural and urban environment, climbing walls, running, jumping, vaulting, rolling, and other things that can result in injury. This is why we recommend our classes for beginners to learn the basics of how to land safely, roll out of landings, jump with good form, and other fundamentals. There is inherent danger in many of the things we do, and we won't attempt to obfuscate that. But in our collective experience, the more we practice Parkour, the more prepared our bodies become for real-life obstacles.

It's not about being worried about the next person, or being worried about reaching someone else's level. You have to say, 'I want to do this for myself; I know I can do it and I want to do it because I believe in myself.'

– Rafe Kelley, PNWPA Lead Instructor

Most Parkour injuries consist of sprained ankles, small scrapes, and cuts that occur when traceurs are careless or attempting something beyond their capabilities (for example, jumping from too high up). But even these injuries tend to happen less often than in other competitive sports where there is more pressure to perform and to move in a very specific way.

In Parkour, there is no set form, no rules, no judges, no equipment, clocks, or uniforms. The movements are defined by what works for the individual, what technique allows him to overcome each obstacle safely and effectively no matter what it looks like. Each traceur defines a personal learning curve, finds his own limitations, and progresses at a rate that is appropriate for him. Maybe that means starting out by jumping up a single stair then slowly building up to two and then three. All progress is good. And regular practice makes us stronger, faster, more focused, and more adaptable to all kinds of obstacles. For us, these benefits greatly outweigh the dangers.



Billings Middle School (Greenlake, WA)

Is Parkour only for guys?

Absolutely not. Some women feel they aren't strong enough or can't do the same things guys can. We think women should feel unintimidated about trying Parkour for two important reasons. First, Parkour is about personal advancement and not about competition with others, so we encourage *anyone* to come out and experience the outstanding full-body workout that Parkour offers. Second, women who train Parkour often find that rather than having less overall strength than men, they simply have *different* strengths. Leveraging your unique strengths while understanding and working on your weaknesses is how you learn to overcome obstacles in your own way; and that is what Parkour is all about. Here in the Pacific Northwest, some of our community's most talented traceurs are female, and the scene is growing steadily.



Matt (Seattle, WA)

FAQ :: Logistics

Do I have to be in good physical shape?

Parkour is a discipline that is about personal progression. You do not have to have any special talents or abilities to enjoy it and benefit from it. It is simply about improving your own ability to move, which is something everyone is capable of, no matter what physical level you start from. Some of the more spectacular maneuvers in Parkour, of course, are not appropriate for someone without a sufficient level of fitness and skill, but at its most basic level everyone can practice Parkour and progress. The full-body nature of the Parkour workout also makes it a great way to get into shape.

What do I need to participate?

Parkour requires no equipment. It can be practiced in a bathing suit or business suit, in boots or barefoot. After some practice, you may find that certain types of clothing and footwear can make the practice easier. When you come out for your first training session, we recommend loose fitting athletic clothes and comfortable athletic shoes. A water bottle is always a good idea too.

Where can I do it?

You can practice Parkour anywhere you can move; the first obstacle you have to deal with is simply the distance from one point to another. On flat ground you can practice walking, running, jumping, rolling and crawling by starting in your front lawn, or in your living room. Adding in more variation by having to overcome things like railings, walls, stairs, rocks, and trees makes it more challenging but the original concept stays the same. Traceurs tend to practice in environments like public parks and college campuses where the surroundings are interesting and they're less likely to be a nuisance to private property owners.

How do I get started?

You can certainly practice and learn Parkour on your own, but we find that many beginners try to progress too quickly in order to attempt things they see online and in movies. Pushing your body too far, too fast significantly increases the risk of injury and we recommend seeking experienced traceurs or instructors to learn from first.



The PNWPA attempts to provide the best resources available to beginning traceurs by linking Parkour communities together, publishing educational information, and developing instructional programs. We believe that nothing can beat the instruction of a Parkour coach or an experienced traceur, because it ensures that you learn the fundamentals first. Visit one of our affiliated communities to find out about Parkour events (jams) in your area. Most jams are free and open to the public. Start at our website, www.pnwpa.com.

Is it legal on public property?

There is nothing illegal about the fundamental aspects of Parkour. And by its very definition and nature, Parkour can be practiced anywhere; that's part of what makes it so enjoyable for us. This of course includes public and private property. In most cases, jams organized for the general public, such as those posted on the PNWPA-affiliated websites, occur in public places like city parks or, in the case of gym jams, in private gymnastics facilities with permission from the owner. Sometimes, even in public areas, traceurs are asked to move along by police or security. While we often feel that it is our right to practice Parkour in these places, the PNWPA's strong recommendation for all traceurs is to always be respectful and always move along when asked by an official to do so.

At all times, you are responsible for your own body and actions. The PNWPA does not carry insurance or accept liability for any person's actions while engaging in any activity, whether or not it is sponsored or organized by the PNWPA.

We're doing the types of things you see children doing naturally, just on a higher, more focused level. But people have an irrational fear of the unknown, and all of a sudden they see us doing things that were never even considered by the architect's designs; breaking the mold of urban space traffic-flow patterns.

– Tyson Cecka, PNWPA Chair

info :: PNWPA Membership

Interested in becoming a member of the PNWPA, or want to learn more about us? Contact us at info@pnwpa.com. We also welcome information from other Parkour communities who wish to participate in our events or join our network.

more :: Personal Experience

This is a constant challenge, but you push yourself to do what you think is impossible. You build up your mind-set and the strength to do it. It's freedom.

– Janine Cundy

Unlike with many sports there's no perfect body type, and no one has any better ranking than anyone else. It's not about finding the best people, it's about finding the best in people.

– Daetan Huck

It's a great way to get in shape; it teaches you disciplines similar to martial arts without the element of violence. And it's a great mode of transportation.

– Austin Hinderer

I've had Parkour in my mind and body for about a year now, and am finally learning when to push it and when to rest. But I want to go out and play. I want to go out and scratch my hands up teaching my body how to be better, move better. I realize in these times just how important this training is to me, what it's done to change the person I'm becoming, and how I wouldn't really know what to do if I hadn't found my movement.

– Brandee Laird

I'm making a lifestyle change for the better. I've been interested in trying Parkour for awhile now. I've recently found some dedication and motivation to quit smoking and eating poorly and get out and have some fun! It's a great big world, why play inside?

– Michael Thompson



It's like being a kid again. You don't have to worry about how you look doing it, you just do it. You can just let loose and let your imagination take over.

– Rob Bradstreet

I've learned a lot doing Parkour, including that there were muscles in my body that may have never been used before. Parkour is hands down the most comprehensive, most rewarding workout I've ever done. And that's just the physical part.

– Jeremy Modjeska

more :: In The Media

Bereft of rules or formal guidelines, the sport is a blank slate for anyone who wants to write her own playbook while getting in shape and enjoying the outdoors. Parkour is freedom. Parkour is the first Amendment of the human body.

– Seattle Metropolitan, 03.2007

Eventually, you see the sterile, urban environments others see in totally different ways, backyards of challenge and opportunity. No special equipment needed. Forget the gym or the pool – Parkour can be done anytime, anywhere.

– Seattle Times, 04.26.2007

Unlike many sports, Parkour bans competitiveness. There are no specific moves. It does not involve any extraneous artistic flourishes. And it's something you can never win. Instead, traceurs strive for their personal best and develop skills based on their physiology and abilities.

– The News Tribune, 04.19.2007

For all its inherent risks, Parkour encourages good habits. The sport is heavy on discipline and self-improvement. True traceurs don't smoke (because it would hurt their endurance) or run under the influence (because it would hurt their balance and agility).

– TIME, 04.05.2007

[T]raceurs strive for their personal best and develop skills based on their physiology and abilities. In that sense, it might not even be called a sport, but a philosophy that incorporates movement.

– Tacoma News Tribune, 08.19.2007



Whatcom Park (Bellingham, WA)

Parkour allows big kids to channel Spiderman with the fearlessness of younger days, balanced with the wisdom of adult discipline and safety. Traceurs range in age from the late teens to early 30s and they typically have some kind of background in gymnastics, martial arts, break dancing or acrobatics. But they can also come in cold, like [PNWPA Member] Sam Wilson, 25, of Mukilteo.

– Seattle PI, 12.19.2007



Whatcom Falls (Bellingham, WA)

feedback :: What Do You Think?

So are you ready to try Parkour? Do you have questions, concerns, or ideas about the PNWPA or the information we publish? We welcome your feedback and your stories. Visit us online at www.pnwpa.com for the most up-to-date Parkour resources and information about our activities, or email us with your feedback at info@pnwpa.com.

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