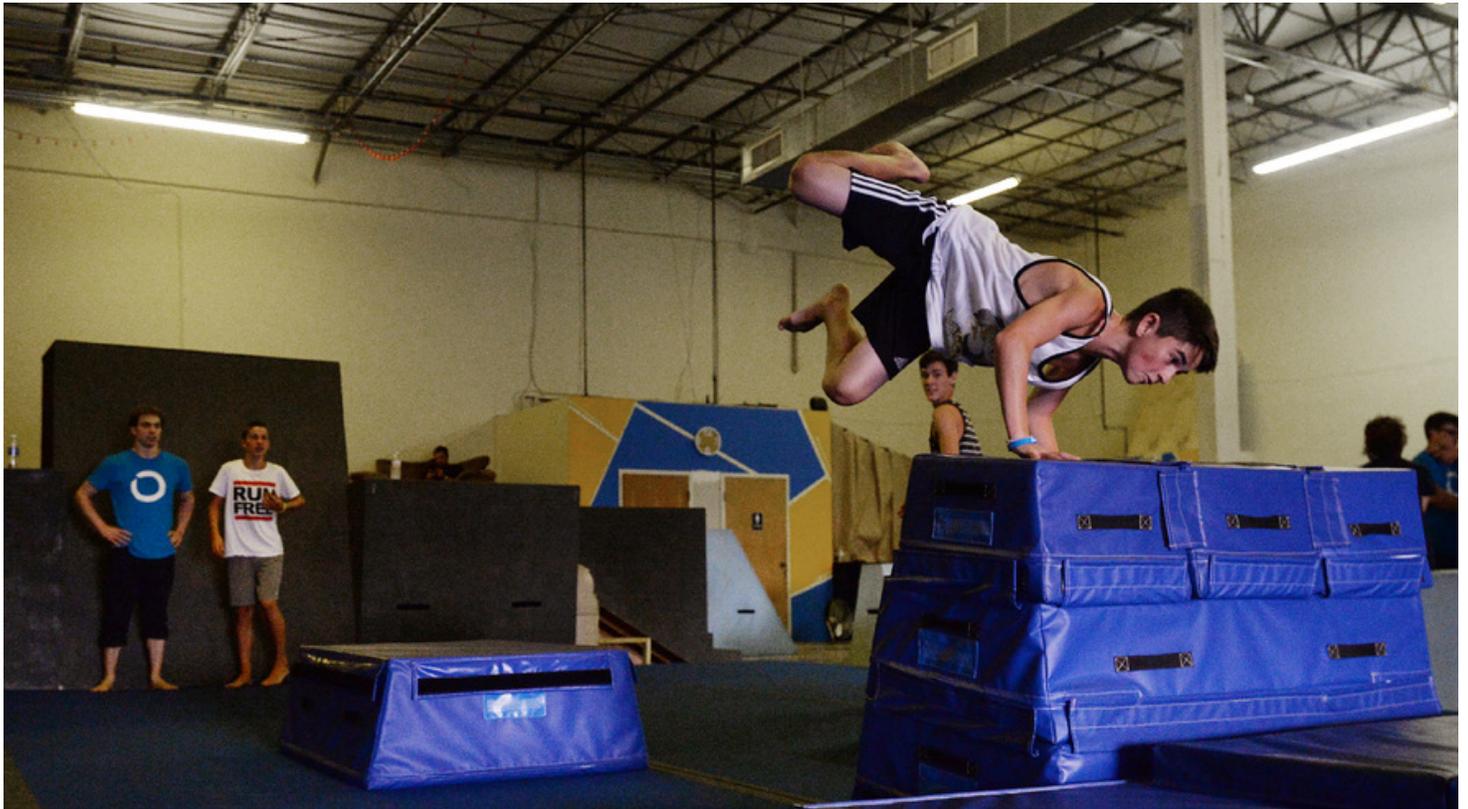


Want to jump over and off stuff? Try parkour

By The Raleigh News and Observer, adapted by Newsela staff on 11.23.14

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Level **780L**



Cru Mahoney, 13, goes through a parkour workout in Raleigh, North Carolina, Aug. 7, 2014. Parkour is a training discipline using movement that developed from military obstacle courses. Practitioners aim to get from A to B in the most efficient way possible. Chuck Liddy/Raleigh News & Observer/TNS

RALEIGH, N.C. — The young man sprints down a city street. He comes to a fence and jumps over it, hitting the ground running on the other side. He isn't running from the police, he is practicing parkour.

Parkour is a sport that is becoming more popular in the United States and around the world. People who do parkour are known as “traceurs.” For traceurs, the whole world is a playground.

Traceurs bounce off walls, jump over fences, hop off roofs and leap down — or up — stairs.

Nick Faircloth, 23, first discovered parkour when he was 16. He says he was not very active at the time. “I didn't do a whole lot,” he remembers.

"The Freedom Of Play"

One day, Faircloth was in the woods behind a relative's house. He began to run and jump among the boulders and fallen trees. Later on, he was surfing the Internet when he discovered French

kids doing the same moves he was, but in the city.

Doing parkour was as close as a regular person could come to being a superhero, Faircloth felt. He was hooked. Now, he is part-owner of a gym that teaches parkour.

“Parkour is essentially training yourself to move more efficiently from Point A to Point B effectively, safely and with speed,” he said. “It’s about training hard to enjoy the freedom of play.”

Most people think parkour started as a French military training program in Vietnam in the 1950s. In the 1990s, French teens started doing parkour and changed it for city life.

Soon, towns around Paris were filled with young people running and jumping through the streets. They showed athletic skill that’s not usually seen on city streets.

At first, the sport stayed in France. Then, smartphone cameras and YouTube allowed the sport to go global. Now there is a worldwide community of traceurs.

Special Gyms For Training

In North Carolina, young traceurs can practice at Enso Movement, a gym just for parkour.

On a recent Tuesday evening, parkour teacher Alan Tran led a class of young people in a training session that lasted 75 minutes. The gym is full of obstacles the students can jump over, climb on, or crawl through.

Tran guides the traceurs over platforms and walls. He tells them to watch their form and be safe.

“Let’s work on nice and quiet jumps,” he tells his students. Tran reminds them that landing flat-footed is loud and can hurt.

Most of the students at Enso Movement are middle school to college age.

Kids And Adults Can Have Fun

Cheland Sportsman, age 10, trains in parkour at Enso Movement. He loves it. Cheland goes to parkour classes twice a week but “he’d go every day if he could,” says his dad, Don.

Faircloth says it is no surprise that young people want to do parkour.

“Kids want to be active,” he says. “Sometimes they don’t have options. If you’re not into team sports, your options are limited.”

Parkour is like how kids have been playing for thousands of years, he says. Nowadays, parkour gives them training.

Parkour 101

There is parkour, and there are other similar sports. The differences:

Parkour — It is about moving from Point A to Point B in a safe and speedy manner. That means going over obstacles — fences, walls, benches — whenever safely possible.

Freerunning — Like parkour, it involves running in the city. Yet freerunning is more of a performance. It is related to gymnastics, martial arts, dance and more.

Tricking — Unlike parkour, tricking does not deal with obstacles. It is more about complicated acrobatic moves, kicking, spins, turns and break-dancing.

Quiz

- 1 Select the paragraph from the section "The Freedom Of Play" that describes the origin of parkour.
- 2 Which of the sentences from the section "Kids And Adults Can Have Fun" gives one reason young people might be doing parkour?
- (A) "If you're not into team sports, your options are limited."
 - (B) Cheland goes to parkour classes twice a week but "he'd go every day if he could," says his dad, Don.
 - (C) Cheland Sportsman, age 10, trains in parkour at Enso Movement.
 - (D) Faircloth says it is no surprise that young people want to do parkour.

- 3 Read the sentence from the article.

"Kids want to be active," he says.

Which of the sentences below has a word similar in meaning to "active" as used in the sentence above?

- (A) They were very lively and energetic.
- (B) They were very busy and hard-working.
- (C) It was constantly running and wearing down.
- (D) It has been in operation for years.

- 4 Read the sentence from the article.

Yet freerunning is more of a performance.

Select the word that can replace "performance" without changing the meaning of the sentence.

- (A) accomplishment
- (B) show
- (C) behavior
- (D) fuss