

Find more information online at www.pnwpa.com.

Q. What is my son or daughter getting into?

A. If you're totally unfamiliar with Parkour, you'll probably want to read more about what Parkour is by exploring *The Newbie Guide to Parkour* (available at <http://pnwpa.com/resources/beginners.php>) and *Parkour History* (available at <http://pnwpa.com/resources/whatisparkour.php>). This should give you a sense of what Parkour is all about. We hope you will take away from that information that, foremost, we firmly believe in and practice Parkour as something deeper than a sport. Parkour no doubt offers an excellent physical workout but also a positive, supportive, multi-generational, creative and non-competitive community. It is not a team sport, but while it can be practiced solo, there are always opportunities to train with, teach and learn from others. If your child's experience is anything like that of the many traceurs in the Pacific Northwest, he or she will discover a widespread group of interesting and talented people, make some new friends, and improve his or her physical fitness by (quite literally) leaps and bounds.

Q. How old should my child be before attempting Parkour?

A. Most traceur communities (*traceurs* are practitioners of Parkour) welcome everyone, regardless of age. While there is no minimum age, we recommend that parents of younger children (13 and under) accompany their child to one or more Parkour *jams* (gatherings) to observe and decide whether it is appropriate for their child. There are often opportunities to meet up at a gymnasium environment which is an excellent (and very safe) place to try Parkour for the first time. *Gym jams* frequently offer supervised instruction by trained gymnastics and Parkour experts in addition to soft mats so that high-impact basics such as jumping, landing, rolling and vaulting can be learned and attempted safely. At gym jams, a parental waiver for traceurs under 18 is required, just as it would be for any organized gymnastics activity. Remember that parents are always welcome at any Parkour jam – you're encouraged to set limits for your child, ask questions, and even attempt some Parkour yourself!

Q. Can I talk to other parents of young traceurs about the risks and benefits of Parkour?

A. Absolutely! PNWPA would be happy to put you in touch with other parents of young traceurs who have been active in their child's Parkour training. Contact us by visiting the Contact section of our website if you are interested in speaking to one of these parents.

Q. Who is my child hanging out with?

A. In most cases, the answer to this question is *we don't know*. Unlike organized sporting events, Parkour occurs whenever and wherever a person or group of people feel inspired to practice it. This might be a few friends walking down the street, spotting a park, and practicing some cat leaps there, or it might be a major cross-borders jam planned on a web forum for months in advance. If you are the parent of a young child, we would encourage you to attend at least one jam and get to know some of the regular traceurs. Just like your child's other friends and activity partners, it's important that you know and trust the traceurs with whom your child is practicing. The PNWPA board members (all of us active traceurs) are more than happy to meet with you, answer any questions you may have, and let you know which jams we will be attending (but please read *Who is responsible for my child when he or she attends a Parkour jam?* below).

Q. Is Parkour dangerous?

A. Like any sport, Parkour can be dangerous if proper safety precautions are not taken. Most Parkour injuries occur when the traceur is careless or attempting something beyond their capabilities (for example, jumping from too high up). And like any new physical activity, those starting out will have to get accustomed to using new muscle groups and body motions which can lead to anything from soreness to more serious injury if overly strenuous activity is attempted too soon. Each traceur must be able to know his or her limitations and progress at a rate that is appropriate. Many times some of the more experienced traceurs can help judge when it is right for your child to attempt certain things, but ultimately your child must be responsible for him or herself. This last part cannot be stressed enough: we take safety and personal responsibility very seriously.

Q. But seriously, isn't Parkour pretty dangerous? I've seen videos of people doing backflips off of bridges and jumping across rooftops.

A. Those things are absolutely dangerous if your child is not an expert. They are also not what most traceurs do on a regular basis. Advanced gymnastics are for advanced gymnasts – and most of us aren't. Parkour does involve moving through the natural and urban environment, climbing on walls, running, jumping, vaulting, rolling and other things that could result in injury. This is why we recommend the gym jams for beginners to learn the basics of how to land properly, roll out of landings, jump with proper form and other fundamentals. There is inherent danger in many of these things 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. Regular Parkour practice makes us stronger, faster, more focused and more adaptable to all kinds of problems. For us, these benefits greatly outweigh the dangers.

Q. Will my son or daughter be trespassing or breaking any laws when he or she practices Parkour?

A. 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 Washington Parkour website occur in public places like city parks or, in the case of gym jams, in private gymnastics facilities with permission from the owner. Remember that as a parent you can (and especially for younger children, we hope you will) impose limits on where your child practices Parkour and which jams he or she attends. 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. To our knowledge, there has never been any legal (criminal or civil) action against any traceur resulting from practicing Parkour in the Pacific Northwest. PNWPA works hard to maintain Parkour's reputation in the community; it is in everyone's best interest that the word *Parkour* be associated with activity that is fun, healthy, safe and legal.

Q. Who is responsible for my child when he or she attends a Parkour jam?

A. At all times, your child is responsible for his or her own safety, actions and body. 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. In addition, while traceur communities affiliated with PNWPA are always available and happy to help new traceurs learn the fundamentals of Parkour, we are not in a position to give medical or any other type of professional advice to your child; he or she, and you, must decide what activities are appropriate to attempt.

Q. What if my child gets injured during a Parkour jam?

A. It is important to remember that Parkour jams are simply ad hoc meet-ups of anyone interested in Parkour. There is no guarantee that anybody with first aid training will be present; indeed, it is possible that no representative of PNWPA will be present at all. As with any activity, make sure you know where and with whom your child is going and, if necessary, that someone in the group knows how to reach you in the event of an emergency. We always stress the benefits of safety in numbers!

Q. Is there any equipment cost, membership fee, or exclusive conditions required for my child to do Parkour?

A. One of the things we love about Parkour is that you only need one piece of equipment to do it – yourself. Parkour is about using the human body to overcome obstacles. You don't need expensive uniforms because it isn't a team sport, and you don't have to pay any membership fees because there is no official Parkour club. We do recommend good shoes (visit this thread <<http://washingtonparkour.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=49>> for an ongoing discussion) but any old sneakers will do if your child is just starting out. There are no limits on who can do Parkour. Any event posted on a PNWPA-affiliated website – such as washingtonparkour.com – is open to everybody regardless of race, gender, religion, age, nationality, sexual orientation, etc., etc. There are a few

exceptions but they make up a *very small fraction* of the overall Parkour scene and are always totally optional; examples are:

- Female Traceur Workshops are obviously just for the ladies
- Gym jams at private gymnasiums usually require an entrance fee to cover the cost of renting the facility – typically about \$15 per person
- Meet-ups at facilities such as indoor rock gyms may require membership, a minimum age, or an entrance fee; strictly speaking, these are *not* Parkour but most online jam-planning forums are open for people to post related activities

Q. Is Parkour mostly for boys?

A. Absolutely not. While the balance currently tilts toward males in the Pacific Northwest Parkour community, some of our most talented traceurs are female. If you or your daughter is interested in speaking with an experienced female traceur, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Q. Where can I find additional discussion about this?

A. More information is available at our website, <http://www.pnwpa.com>. To contribute to the discussion, share your views, or suggest additional questions for this FAQ, please visit the “worried parents” thread at the Washington Parkour forum, <http://www.washingtonparkour.com/forums/viewtopic.php?p=15689>.