

Positive Pulse

Your monthly dose of advice on healthy living

July 2019

National Parks and Recreation Month



We're back with more tips on healthy living for the month of July. It's National Parks and Recreation Month! No, it's not time to binge watch your favorite tv show, it's time to get outside and have fun at your local parks and other recreational areas.

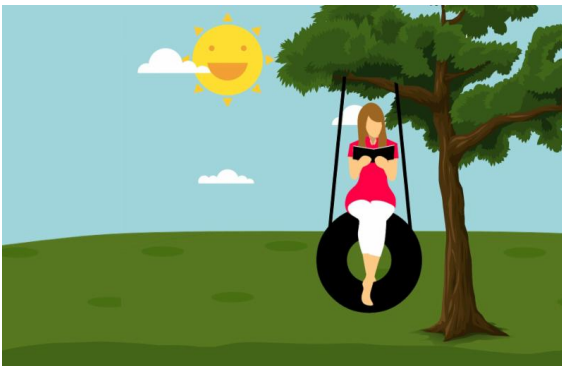
- According to a 2018 study conducted by Wakefield Research and commissioned by the National Recreation and Park Association, an overwhelming majority of Americans assert that they personally benefit from local parks and that their communities benefit from local parks.

- Living close to parks and other recreation facilities is consistently related to higher physical activity levels for both adults and youth, leading to better health.
- According to a 2017 NRPA Park Pulse poll, 83% of Americans believe it is important that their local government makes environmental initiatives a priority; creating and maintaining parks can help this.

Source: [National Recreation and Park Association](#)

Click here to search by area or activity to discover New Jersey's wealth of state parks, forests, and recreation areas!

If you are looking to hike, bike or walk, this list shows which are parks and trails accessible!



Importance of Local Parks

We Use Them Often

- Americans, on average, visit their local park and recreation facilities more than twice a month.
- Support for local parks is widespread, spanning different age groups, income strata, household types and political affiliations.

They Are Generally Available

- Three in four Americans live within a 10-minute walk of a local park or other recreational facility.

We Want Them Near Our Homes

- 85% of Americans consider high-quality park and recreation amenities important factors when choosing a new place to live.

They Are A Boon From Our Local Governments

- More than nine in 10 Americans agree that parks and recreation is an important local government service.
- According to a 2010 study, for every dollar spent in afterschool programming, it saved on average \$6 in crime, court and detention costs.
- This is why great summer camps, open gyms and after school programs in

neighborhood centers are an effective and essential human service.

They Help The Economy

- According to a study conducted by the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University and the National Recreation and Park Association, America's local park agencies generated more than \$154 billion in economic activity and supported more than 1 million jobs from their operations and capital spending alone in 2015.
- Public parks increase property value of residential properties immediately adjacent to parks by as much as 20% of the properties' marginal value - especially if the park is a natural area.
- The economic impact that large tournaments, competitions and special events hosted in public parks bring to the local economy can offset park maintenance operating budgets which are normally thought of as totally subsidized high-cost centers.
- Having destination attractions in parks such as exhibits, museums, river sports put-ins, and state-of-the-art play spaces also attract tourist dollars to an area.
- The Trust for Public Land has created a guide for [Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System](#) that enumerates those benefits in terms of seven major factors—property value, tourism, direct use, health, community cohesion, clean water, and clean air.

SOURCE: [National Recreation and Park Association](#)
<http://www.lynchburgparksandrec.com/top-5-benefits-of-parks-and-recreation/>



Health Benefits of Parks

We Exercise More When We Use Them

- The Centers for Disease Control found that increased access to places for physical activity led to a 25.6 percent increase in people exercising 3 or more times per week.
- Whether it is active recreation pursuits like athletic leagues, fitness and dance programs, trails and active amenities like playgrounds and pools, our parks provide natural locations for organized physical activities, as well as unstructured spaces that overtly or subtly encourage physical activity.

They Help Keep Children Healthy

- On average, children who live in greener environments weigh less than children who live in less green areas.
- Children that have easy access to a playground are approximately five times more likely to have a healthy weight than children that do not have easy access to playgrounds.

They Lower Obesity in Adults, Too

- The nation's park and recreation facilities are on the frontline in the battle against the obesity epidemic and other chronic health issues.

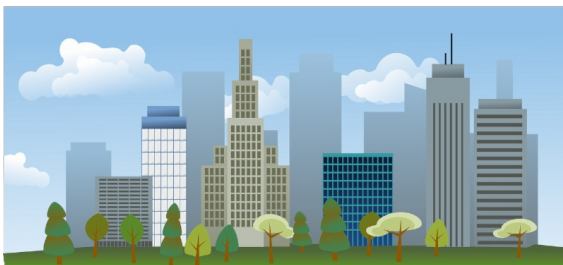
Other Health Improvements

- One study showed that individuals who move to greener areas have significant and long-lasting improvements in mental health.
- Another study showed that greener environments enhance recovery from surgery, enable and support higher levels of physical activity, improve immune system functioning, and help diabetics achieve healthier blood glucose levels.
- Passive leisure activities in parks like reading and contemplation improve mood, reduce stress and enhance a sense of wellness.

SOURCE: [National Recreation and Park Association](http://www.nationalrecreationandparkassociation.org/)

<http://www.lynchburgparksandrec.com/top-5-benefits-of-parks-and-recreation/>

Watch the video below from The Trust for Public Land for more ways that parks can improve your health.



Environmental Benefits of Parks

Trees Help Lower Our Carbon Footprint

- A park with one acre of trees absorbs the carbon dioxide produced by driving a car 11,000 miles.

Parks Give Our Cities More Plants and Wildlife

- Parks do a great deal to contribute to species richness in urban settings.
- A review of more than 60 studies by IFPRA shows that there is strong evidence to

support the concept that parks support both plant and animal biodiversity.

- This offers not only an important educational opportunity, but additionally supports overall ecosystem functionality.

Parks Help With Waterfall and Water Usage

- Parks reduce the impact of large storms and flooding by serving as sponges that soak up run off from nearby paved surfaces during rain events.
- This in turn prevents flooding and decreases property damage.
- Parks that are well-designed also reduce water usage by recycling and storing this water for use during times of low precipitation.

Parks Cool Us Down in Hot Weather

- Evidence not only shows that parks are cooler than their surrounding cities, but actually shows that parks contribute to overall urban cooling – parks make our cities more comfortable in the summer!

SOURCE: [National Recreation and Park Association](#)

Let's Stay Healthy at the Park!



**Looking to learn more about healthy living?
We can hold a Healthy Lifestyles Workshop at your
location!**



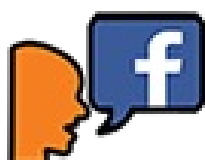
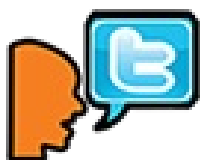
Don't see what you're looking for? We'll make it for you!
 E-mail NJSAP@ArcNJ.org or call 732-749-8514 to schedule a
 training at your location!



The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey

The Healthy Lifestyles Project (HLP) is a program of The Arc of New Jersey and receives funding through a grant awarded by The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey.

For more information on HLP and NJSAP
 follow us on social media!





New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project

A program of The Arc of New Jersey since 1983

Promoting Advocacy and Independence for People
with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities