



**Saint Paul**  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



# Staying Active Outside During COVID-19

## *Resources and Ideas for SPPS Families and Staff*

Social distancing and stay-at-home orders do not mean families have to stay inside - going outside is allowed. In fact, getting outside is a great way to keep your family physically and mentally healthy during this stressful time. This document includes ideas for staying active outdoors in St. Paul, along with resources for helping kids stay safe while walking and biking. Also, remember you can simply step outside your door and enjoy your neighborhood by foot, bike or scooter.

Be sure to keep a healthy six feet away from those not in your household, and avoid shared equipment like playgrounds and benches. Stay home if you are sick. If a park or trail is too crowded to safely practice this, save that walk or ride for another time, or head to another place. Six feet is about the length of an adult-sized bicycle. See the graphic below from the [Minnesota Department of Health](#) to visualize this distance.



According to Governor Tim Walz's [Emergency Executive Order 20-20](#) Directing Minnesotans to Stay Home, March 25, 2020: "Individuals may engage in outdoor activity (e.g., walking, hiking, running, biking, driving for pleasure, hunting, or fishing) consistent with remaining at least six feet apart from individuals from other households."

*This document was inspired by [one created by Minneapolis Public Schools](#) and includes some of the same content. Check it out for some more ideas from our neighboring city.*



# Walks, Trails and Hikes

I don't know enough  
about balance to tell you  
how to do it.

I think, though,  
it's in the trying  
and the letting go.

That the scales measuring  
right and wrong - quiver  
and stand still.

## Art & History Walks

- How well do you know the history of your city? The [Saint Paul Historical Society](#) offers a number of self-guided walks around a number of Saint Paul neighborhoods, pointing out historical landmarks, still standing or not. There is also a mobile app available, loaded with information and identifying points on an interactive GPS-enabled map.
- Saint Paul has compiled a [public art/sculpture tour](#). Consisting of thirty-nine attractions, this list is largely located in the downtown area. Take this walk and find out the story on all those monuments or structures you've always wondered about or may have overlooked in the past.
- Take a walk in your neighborhood and stumble upon some poetry. Work by local poets is stamped on sidewalks throughout St. Paul. [Learn more about the program](#) and [find poems in your neighborhood](#). When you get home, consider writing your own poems on your sidewalk with chalk!

## Nature Walks/Trails

- The [Indian Mounds Park Tree Trek](#) is a great way of getting in a mile-long walk and learning the types of trees that populate our urban forest. This website lays out a walking route and identifies 28 trees along the path, making it especially helpful when there are no leaves yet to help identify the tree species. Engage your inner arborist!
- After learning the trees at Indian Mounds Park, test your newfound arboreal knowledge by taking a stroll through [Horton Park Arboretum](#). The park, located at Hamline and Englewood Avenues, is Saint Paul's first and only arboretum and offers 50 unique tree varieties.
- Use the mobile-friendly [St. Paul Park Finder](#) to find a park near you. There are many neighborhood parks in Saint Paul, which may be less crowded than some of the regional parks, but just as fun.

## Overlooked Gems

- The Furness Trail originates in the Hayden Heights neighborhood and runs southwest for approximately 16+ blocks before ending just beyond Hazel Park Preparatory Academy's back field. Formerly a streetcar right-of-way, the trail is largely paved. It can be located using google maps or the [Saint Paul Bicycle Coalition](#) also has a webpage with a map and trail description.



# Bike Trails and Routes



Saint Paul offers a wide range of bike route options for families and cycling enthusiasts. Read the ideas below, or click the “bicycling” option in [Google Maps](#) to discover a new bike route near you.

## Bike Routes for Families

- [Como Lake](#) and [Lake Phalen](#) both offer dedicated, one-way bike paths, making them ideal for families with young cyclists. Portions of Lake Phalen’s path are shared so riders need to be alert to pedestrian traffic. Path traffic can get crowded with good weather, however, so consider going at off-hours.
- The [Lilydale Regional Trail](#) starts at Harriet Island and meanders along the Mississippi River backwaters, with a trail that splits, providing a short 3.2 miles loop. This is the kind of trail that makes you forget you’re in the city.

## Longer Routes for More Experienced Cyclists

- The [Bruce Vento Regional Trail](#) runs 7.9 miles north-south on the East Side. The trail passes through iconic Saint Paul scenery, such as Swede Hollow and the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary. It also serves as a connector to various other trails, such as the Gateway Trail.
- The website [MidwestWeekends](#) has put together a Twin Cities History Ride. This tour offers four cities, two rivers and a twenty-two mile ride. Anticipate paved trails, designated bike lanes, and other street riding with this route.

## Mountain biking

- [Battle Creek Regional Park](#) is the big dog when it comes to Saint Paul mountain biking. It offers 4.5 miles of single track mountain bike trails, along with multi-use and paved bike tracks.



# Helping kids walk and bike safely



This is a great time to help children learn how to walk and bike safely in their neighborhood. See below for resources that can help provide instruction on safe biking and walking.

## Safe Walking:

- The National Center for Safe Routes to School has helpful tips for parents and caregivers about walking: [Teaching Children to Walk Safely as They Grow and Develop](#).
- The North Carolina Department of Transportation has a series of child-friendly videos to build safe walking skills called *Let's Go Walking*. Topics include:
  - [Walking near traffic](#)
  - [Crossing Streets](#)
  - [Crossing Intersections](#)

## Safe Biking

- The National Center for Safe Routes to School has also produced helpful tips for parents and caregivers about biking in English and Spanish:
  - [Helping Your Child be a Safe Bicyclist](#)
  - [Ayudando a su hijo a ser un ciclista seguro](#)
- Seattle Children's Hospital has tips on bike helmet fit in English and Spanish:
  - [Bike and Multi-Sport Helmets: Quick Fit Check](#)
  - [Casco para andar en bicicleta y para múltiples deportes: verificación rápida para el ajuste](#)
- Be sure to do an ABC Quick Check to make sure your bike is safe and ready for riding, See this [BikeMN description](#) and/or this [video from the Telegraph](#).
- View these bike education videos for elementary and middle school-aged children:
  - [Short video from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#).
  - The North Carolina Department of Transportation videos about safe cycling: including [Getting Ready to Ride](#) and [Bike Basics](#).
- View these bike education video for high school children (good refresher for adults, too!) from the Federal Highway Administration in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).





# Things Families Can Focus On While Out Walking and Biking



## Be a Community Scientist

- Identify Birds and Their Songs. There are a number of online resources for birding. Try and see if you can match the correct bird to its call on this [website](#) by State of Play. This webpage also offers terrific drawings of 50 different bird species. The next time you're outside, listen closely and see if you can correctly identify the songmaker. [Youtube](#) also offers several birding tutorials for identifying bird species and their songs.
- The website *iNaturalist* allows you to record your outdoor observations of the natural world, then share them in an online platform that spans the globe. Register at <https://www.inaturalist.org/> to get started.

## I Spy-The Saint Paul Version

- Join us in a virtual game of I Spy St. Paul, where we share hidden gems from our neighborhoods that we find on our walks and bike rides! We will use the [SPPS Wellness Twitter page](#) (@WellnessSPPS) to play. Here's how:
  - Go for a walk or bike ride and take a photo of something visually interesting or unique in your neighborhood. Be sure it's a photo of something in St. Paul! Then, use one of the two options below to share your photo on Twitter and see if others can guess where it is:
    - Option 1: Post your photo to Twitter with a caption that includes #ISpyStPaul and @WellnessSPPS. We'll retweet it to our page, too.
    - Option 2: Email photos (jpeg format please) to [carol.grady@spps.org](mailto:carol.grady@spps.org). Include the location of the photo in your email. We will post it to Twitter so others can guess where it is!
  - Visit the SPPS Wellness Twitter page or search #ISpyStPaul to find photos of hidden gems from around St. Paul. See if you can guess where they are and post your guess in the comments section! (Note: you can visit the SPPS Wellness Twitter and play the game without joining Twitter; however, you can only post comments if you have a Twitter account.)



# Things Families Can Focus On While Out Walking and Biking (Continued)



## Mindful Walking

- Having a mindfulness practice is a proven strategy for reducing stress and helping children learn to self regulate their behavior. It can be applied in a lot of different ways, including when you're out taking walks. One of the best ways to practice mindfulness is by getting outside and getting in touch with nature. Minneapolis Public Schools has an in-depth [guide](#) to mindful walking that includes student lessons, breathing techniques, and many resources. 1000 Petals is a Saint Paul-based company that has done a number of MoveMindfully residencies within SPPS schools and it also offers [mindful walking tips](#). 1000 Petals is also offering a 15-minute daily, live streaming session through its Facebook page and is geared for children, families, and educators.

**Take advantage of the spring weather, and get outside!**  
**Remember, staying active is a great tool for keeping yourself and your family physically and mentally healthy, as long as you maintain a six-foot distance from people outside of your household.**

*This six foot distance is based on current guidance as of March 25, 2020. Be sure to follow the most current guidance from the [Minnesota Department of Health](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) on keeping yourself, your family, and your community safe from coronavirus. As always, be sure to stay home if you are at all sick.*

*The creation of this document was supported by the Minnesota Department of Transportation and by the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership through Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health and the Minnesota Department of Health.*

