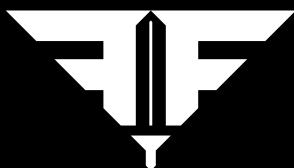


INTRODUCTION TO

PARKOUR



FIGHT OR FLIGHT
ACADEMY



CONTENTS

Welcome	01
Who We Are	02
History - Parkour Style	07
Getting Started	10
There Is Always A Place To Train	16
Know Your Rights	17
Find A Cool Spot	19
Let's Move!	23
Falling	23
Balance	25
Precision Jumps	26
Parkour Roll	27
Vaults	28
Climbing	29
Workouts	30
Piece Together The Puzzle	31
Dealing With The Inevitable: How To Process Fear	32
Leave No Trace	34
Harcore Parkour!	35
Encounters Of The Parkour Kind	37
Become A Member	41



WELCOME!

Say, thanks for picking up this here E-Book! There aren't a whole lot of Parkour books out there, so that was pretty cool of you. We hope that you can learn some really awesome stuff with our help! If this E-Book does its job right, you'll have the tools and knowledge to start learning Parkour with little more than this resource. Hopefully, you'll read this and realize that Parkour is for you, too!

So what is Parkour? To the average person, it's easy to define it as being able to get over obstacles.

For a real definition, we can say "going from Point A to Point B, quickly, safely and efficiently, using your body to overcome obstacles in your way." Someone who does Parkour is a traceur.

Woah woah, that's a lot...

You're right! Let's create some more context so it makes a bit more sense. (History lesson inbound, oh no! Just kidding, it's interesting we promise)



WHO WE ARE

Fight or Flight Academy is a Parkour gym in Minnesota that opened in 2011. Owner and Head Instructor, Chad Zwadlo, wanted a space dedicated to teaching people movement arts. Martial arts, dance, sword, and of course, Parkour. For nearly a decade now, we've been zeroing in on the perfect curriculum and churning out amazing athletes.

Fight or Flight Academy has deep roots in the Parkour community that exists today. From professional Parkour athletes to first timers, we've been a specific pick for people to visit. Our team members have travelled the world, won competitions, taught their skills to our students. We even have our own recognized instructor certification program!

And our team? They are **BAD-ASS!**

OUR STUDENTS

"The instructors are great about building up your skills in small increments and helping you improve 1-2 things at a time, so nothing gets overwhelming. It's always a good time here and people are really nice — newbies are welcomed and treated like family"

KM Murray

CHAD ZWADLO

Chad has been training Parkour for 20 years, and teaching it professionally for over 10! He has a vast movement background, and was one of the few people doing Parkour before he even knew it had a name. **Fight or Flight Academy** has been at the center of his life for the last 9 years. None of this would have been possible without Chad's passion for Parkour.



KIM DERIDER

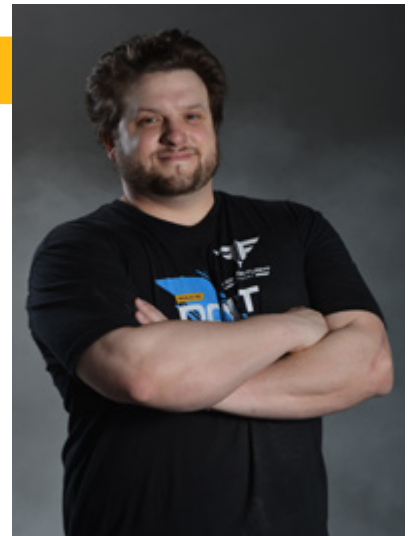
Kim started as a student at **Fight or Flight** in 2012. He, like many others, was not good at Parkour when he first tried it. Imagine that! But he had fun, and loved it. By his surprise he became a coach in 2015. Just five months later, he became a part-owner of the gym. Kim has worked as hard as anyone could to be the best Parkour gym owner he could. Few people in Parkour have as much drive and excitement to teach Parkour the way Kim has.

LUKE ALBRECHT

Luke is the coach for our private group for **Fight or Flight Academy Online**. He's a super hard worker, and it shows in his Parkour career. He's been the head instructor at multiple gyms, and is a true staple of the Parkour community in the USA. Between his insane skills in movement, and his genuine and kind demeanor, he's the perfect fit for **Fight or Flight**.

SAL STEFFANO

Sal may have been the most pivotal addition to our team. Nobody knew what would stem from those first introductions. Sal realized what **Fight or Flight Academy** was all about, and started loving Parkour. Chad and Kim saw what an asset Sal could be, with his experience in small business. Sal has kept **Fight or Flight** on track with its mission: to teach Parkour to anyone, and everyone.

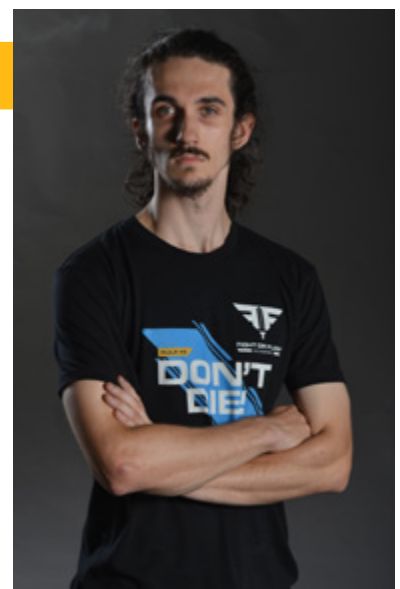


ANDREW LEGATT

Andrew is our main video makin' man. Andrew wore a suit to his interview and reality hit him - it's a Parkour gym. We were mostly in sweats, and here he stood in his three-piece. Since joining the team, Andrew has been enjoying learning Parkour at **Fight or Flight**. As he learns more about the sport, he's able to apply his wicked editing skills even better. He's excited to learn more Parkour, and we're sure it will make for even better videos in the future!

HOLDEN HAGERMAN

Lastly, we have Holden, our writer. Holden started as a student at **Fight or Flight Academy** right when it opened in 2011. He's been training Parkour ever since, and has always been an involved member of the community. He started coaching at the gym in 2015, and has been a common presence at the gym. Holden has always seen the value that **Fight or Flight**, and Parkour, has brought to his life, and done his best to provide similar value in return.



Together, Chad and Kim have made **Fight or Flight Academy** what it is today. They ended up being fantastic business partners, and passionate coaches. They have transformed the curriculum and the staff into a world class system that produces skilled Parkour athletes.

We have been showing people how to do Parkour from every background for almost 10 years now. We've proven that anyone can do Parkour. With **Fight or Flight Academy** at the plate, the barrier to start Parkour is the lowest it has ever been.

Before we bust into the rest of our Parkour history lesson, let's pop into...

THE 12 RULES AT FIGHT OR FLIGHT ACADEMY

Rule #1 - **Leave No Trace**

Look...honestly, we stole this from camping (sorry, Smokey). This is the first rule because it is the core of how the public sees Parkour. Never leave a training spot in worse shape than you found it - if you can, leave it cleaner!

Rule #2 - **Warm Up, Cool Down**

Before you break into your training session, get your blood pumping and warm up your joints. They'll thank you later. Have your session, and when you finish up, cool down! Recovery is important, so stretch!

Rule #3 - **Don't Hit Your Head**

We shouldn't really have to tell you why...your brain is in there! But we guess this one is kind of important

Rule #4 - **Always Land on the Balls of Your Feet, Never Your Balls!**

When you land, land on the balls of your feet. Seriously! Any time you land, your balls of your feet should be the only part of your foot on the obstacle. It's the foundation of landing technique. And don't land on your balls, because... just don't.

Rule #5 - Move Quietly

Quiet movement means good technique. What, why? The more quietly you move, the more engaging it is with your muscles. If you're absorbing with your muscles, then you aren't absorbing with your joints (this is a good thing).

Rule #6 - There is ABSOLUTELY no Rule #6. Got it?**Rule #7 - Don't Climb With Your Elbows or Knees**

Using your elbows and knees to climb isn't good form. You won't get stronger (and thus towards better form) by climbing like this.

Rule #8 - DON'T DIE!

Obviously, you shouldn't die. But at **Fight or Flight Academy** pretty much any time you fall, we'll call that "dying." You tripped on the sidewalk? You died. Don't die!

Rule #9 - Flow Like Water

Flow is core to all Parkour and freerunning. Flow is about continuing your direction and momentum, connecting your movements and being fluid. It should naturally emerge as an element of any Parkour session.

Rule #10 - Control Your Falls

You're going to fall off of stuff and...you're going to want to get better at it. Don't shy away from falling, because it's going to happen. Get better at it, even embrace falling. Just make sure that you're in control on your way down.

Rule #11 - Slow is Smooth, Smooth is Fast

Slow. DOWN! This mantra is about progression. There is no hurry, ever. The more methodical, the more patient you are with your training, the greater the reward. Slow down, smooth things out, get it down. Then you'll be fast without ever realizing it.

Rule #12 - "Être fort pour être utile"

The personal ethos of Georges Hébert, "be strong to be useful." The body and mind are meant to be made strong and sharpened like a tool. A weak body or mind has few uses. Seek strength in every form.

HISTORY - PARKOUR STYLE

Let's take things back to the early 1900's, to a man named **Georges Hébert**. While in the French military, he developed what he called "la méthode naturelle," or the "Natural Method." He studied the physique and movement skills of indigenous people in Africa, as well as around the world.

Hébert also studied the works of other fitness figures, anatomy and its representation in art, and more. After combining all of his studies, he developed "the Natural Method," in which humans are said to utilize 10 families of movement.

- Walking
- Running
- Quadrupedal Movement (crawling)
- Climbing
- Jumping
- Balance
- Lifting and Carrying
- Throwing
- Defence
- Swimming

According to Georges Hébert, these are all of the basic movements of the human body. We think he's pretty smart. He laid out the groundwork for defining the movements the human body was capable of. Not only this, but his belief in a more natural and organic version of fitness has helped shape what Parkour is today. Thanks, Georges!



Georges Hébert via Wikipedia



So who's next, then? Raymond! Everybody loves Raymond! No, no, not that guy. **Raymond Belle**, born in Vietnam in 1939. His father died and he was separated from his parents at a young age during the First Indochina War.

Due to the abuse he suffered, he found resolve to become more fit and stronger. Apparently he would sneak onto the military obstacle course at his orphanage quite regularly!



Some time later, Raymond was allowed to move to France. At 19, he became a military firefighter in Paris. It was here that Raymond Belle discovered the work of Georges Hébert.

“Être fort pour être utile” Be Strong to be Useful

Apparently Raymond Belle felt pretty strongly about those words, and so do we. Raymond pushed himself to smash records in firefighting, and even win competitions. He was, by all means, *super freaking badass*.

In 1973, Raymond had a son, **David Belle**. Though David tried gymnastics and other sports as a kid, he never really found a place in sport or in school.



As a teenager, he had many conversations with his father that led him to realize he wanted those same skills. Sharing the wisdoms Raymond called “*parcours*,” David sought to learn the same useful skills that could help him in life and survival.

Initially training on his own, David Belle moved to Lisses, France, where he and other young men formed the **Yamakasi**. Together, they formed the first group of people doing Parkour as we know it today.

According to the scrawlings of olde (AKA the late 80's), they adopted strict principles so that they could train more effectively and become stronger humans.

- Be Punctual
- Be Inclusive
- No Excuses
- Know Your Limits
- Respect Your Health
- Repetition is Key
- Humility is Central

Honestly, these dudes sound pretty tryhard, even to us. But thanks to them, we have this awesome sport that we call Parkour (or what they called "*l'art du déplacement*" - the art of movement).

Another term you may know, **freerunning**, is also important. Credit goes to Sebastian Foucan of the Yamakasi for its creation (he coined "*l'art du déplacement*").

Instead of taking the pure, utilitarian version of these movements, Foucan chose to add in more gymnastic elements. Flips, twists, even dance and other martial arts slowly seeped in.

Combining all of these elements to creatively interact with your environment and *do cool stuff* is an excellent way to define *freerunning*. As such, Parkour is definitely the foundation of freerunning.

At the end of the day, you won't really be doing Parkour without freerunning, and vice versa.

GETTING STARTED

OUR STUDENTS

“So much fun you almost don’t realize how hard your body is working!”

Ian Wilson

Isn’t Parkour for crazy people? You know, like super shredded Russian dudes that do triple twisting double rodeo mega gainer flips off of cliffs? (Hi, Erik)

All we have to say is: no, absolutely not.

Parkour is for you. Me? Yes, you! I’m talking about the proverbial you. Our current age range of students is 7-58. We’ve taught people as old as 80! Parkour training works for people at any age, because the challenges presented are totally unique to each individual. What makes Parkour difficult for you is not the same as for anyone else. You’ll get so used to dealing with challenge with friends smiling by your side, you’ll be looking for challenges

Things like strength, flexibility, mobility, confidence and fear are all affected greatly by age. Parkour maintains those challenges for people at any age in different ways. Not only that, but Parkour will make you grow in all of those ways. The battle is personal, so the fact that you may not get the same challenge as someone else doesn’t affect your own growth. It’s amazing!

It doesn’t matter your age, shape, or size. You can do Parkour!

But don’t I need to be fit to do Parkour? Again, nope! Parkour starts slowly. People of all levels of fitness can access Parkour techniques. You aren’t going to be jumping off of rooftops on your first day of Parkour. And let’s be real, most of the Parkour community is pretty nerdy. Plenty of Parkour folks that are actual ninja badasses now have known life at lower levels of fitness.

So, what do I need so that I can go try Parkour? Well, you *could* do it naked, if you want...we don't suggest it, though. So maybe clothes? And shoes? Gloves? Yes, yes and NO!

As far as clothes are concerned, it's fairly simple. Remember that you'll be moving around a lot, and wear something comfortable. That's it! The more you do Parkour, the more you will learn what you like (and don't like) to wear when you do it.

The shoe question is ongoing in Parkour. Great shoes come out, great shoes stop being made, people you think are going to make great shoes make crappy ones. Why all this talk about shoes? For one reason: shoes are the only "tool" you use to do Parkour. You can do Parkour in any shoes, though some are better than others. The main point is that you will need some kind of footwear.

Yes, people do train barefoot. You are welcome to do so as well. We won't be diving deep into the merits of barefoot training, but people definitely do it! Phil Doyle has even done some huge jumps *in socks or high heels*. Nutter.



Phil Doyle doing an at-height rail precision jump in heels, because he is crazy and awesome. Credit goes to him, Kie Willis and Storm Freerun

What makes the right Parkour shoe? Well, there's a few elements that we like to point out.

First, grip. Although good technique will help you a lot, some shoes are undeniably grippier than others. Look for shoes with a mostly flat outsole, preferably made from one, continuous piece of rubber. You want to avoid any outsole with big chunks of rubber making up the grip, they'll get torn off and your shoe will be ruined. Any hard plastics on the outsole are also a no go. They aren't grippy! It's easy to test how grippy a shoe is. Throw it on, and kick some concrete! Some shoes need to break their grip in, but you should still be able to tell.

Build is another big factor. You'll brush the side of your shoes up against concrete walls or worse, so fine mesh tops will get shredded quickly. Nothing sucks more than a pair of shoes that have a year's worth of life in the outsole that become unwearable because your toes are hanging out! It's a fine balance between breathability and lightweight construction, versus ruggedness and tough materials.

The shape of your shoe is another element to consider. The toebox (you know, where ya toes go) should be comfortable for your foot's shape. Having your toes crammed together when you do a precision jump is no fun. Also consider the heel elevation of the shoe. A more flat shoe will encourage proper mobility in your ankles and Achilles tendon. Plus, lower profile shoes will make it tougher to roll your ankle, if it comes to that.

The last thing to consider is the padding of the shoe. As a rule of thumb, you want to slowly move towards more minimalistic shoes over time in your Parkour training. There's no need to go train in socks right away, but the goal is to have good enough technique that you don't need padding to make up for it. Shoes with padding have their place, such as in competitions, during a long day of outdoor training, jams, etc. However, being able to move safely and comfortably in the most minimal shoe indicates a high level of skill.

We attached some specific examples of Parkour shoes we've enjoyed wearing over the years. Each shoe has its own features, but every shoe we included is a really solid choice. They all have flat outsoles with good grip. Each shoe has solid durability, and all of them are more durable than an absolute beginner would ever tear through. All of the shoes we picked also boast good comfort, shape and build quality. There's also a wide variety of price points to choose from. Fear not, we won't steer you wrong with any of these picks.



K.O. Drops 2.0



**Onitsuka Tiger
Ultimate 81's**

(if you can find them)



Strike MVMNT



OllloPK's



Reebok Classic Nylons

As far as specific Parkour clothing goes, like we said earlier, whatever is comfortable is the best way to go. You'll see a lot of people training in sweatpants of various sizes, sometimes big baggy ones that were very stylin' in parkour a few years back, sometimes thinner joggers and everything in between. You'll see people in tank tops, t-shirts, hoodies, button downs, Hawaiiin shirts, polo shirts, tights, shorts, etc.

Concrete tears your hands up. Bars tear your hands up. Bricks. Trees. These are surfaces you'll be working with regularly. You may be thinking *"some gloves would mean none of that matters!"*

Let me tell you why you shouldn't use them.

Be strong to be useful.

The principle applies here. Even though it may involve some suffering, making your hands stronger, tougher, so that they can withstand rough surfaces is the best way to go. Reducing the equipment necessary to do Parkour aligns well with the natural and organic method of training. It's just you and your body.

Reducing equipment? I mean, you do this with pads, right? Nope. You don't. You could, but you shouldn't. Why? Because the whole point is using your body to be safe. It's the same issue with gloves.

If you do Parkour with tons of safety gear, what happens when you don't have it? You might trust yourself more than you should, or you're scared because you hid behind the pads. Again, the point of all of this is to use your body, and sharpen it. Your body can do things beyond your wildest dreams, and taking the time to build that right is way more important than some elbow pads. Your elbows will be fine.

It's worth noting, there's a ton of really high-quality Parkour apparel out there. It's more expensive than what you'd find in a department store, but these are brands that are taking the time to make quality garments. There's more clothing designed with Parkour in mind than ever before, and some of these companies are doing a great job on ethical sourcing as well.

At a basic level, it's just athletic wear that also looks nice when you move. As you develop your style in Parkour and freerunning, you may find your clothing will reflect your style. Someone that does huge, powerful jumps with really clean technique can look even better in shorts or joggers. You can just see what their legs are doing, and it's beautiful. Athletes throwing lots of flips and twists may gravitate toward baggier clothing because all of the extra fabric looks amazing mid-cork.

So now that you're getting an understanding of what Parkour is, and the things you'll need to start, we should touch on how to learn it. We say this next statement as objectively as we can, coming from the perspective of Parkour coaches.

Athletes that have a coach in Parkour excel much more quickly.

If anyone in the back needs to hear that again, give me a shout. The reality is that a coach will tell you how to learn techniques the right way. That way, you don't have to listen to 8 different people teach 6 different ways to learn something on YouTube. Not only that, but a coach will keep you safe. They'll be good at anticipating what might go wrong when you're learning.

LEARN MORE ABOUT ONLINE, PERSONALIZED COACHING WITH THE EXPERTS AT FIGHT OR FLIGHT ACADEMY!

This is why you should enroll in **Fight or Flight Academy Online!** We'll get you a personal coach so you always have guidance right when you need it. You'll get good way quicker than you think!



There's a nice segue to wrap up the equipment conversation and head into the where to train conversation. It is convenient to have some equipment of your own to train on, especially if you live in a more rural area.

A trapezoidal vault box is a really handy tool. It has tons of options and things you can do with it. Precision trainers can help you polish your landing techniques too. The more you're willing to build, the more cool stuff you'll have to train on.

This is all stuff you can have lying around in a backyard. Which means...

THERE IS ALWAYS A PLACE TO TRAIN

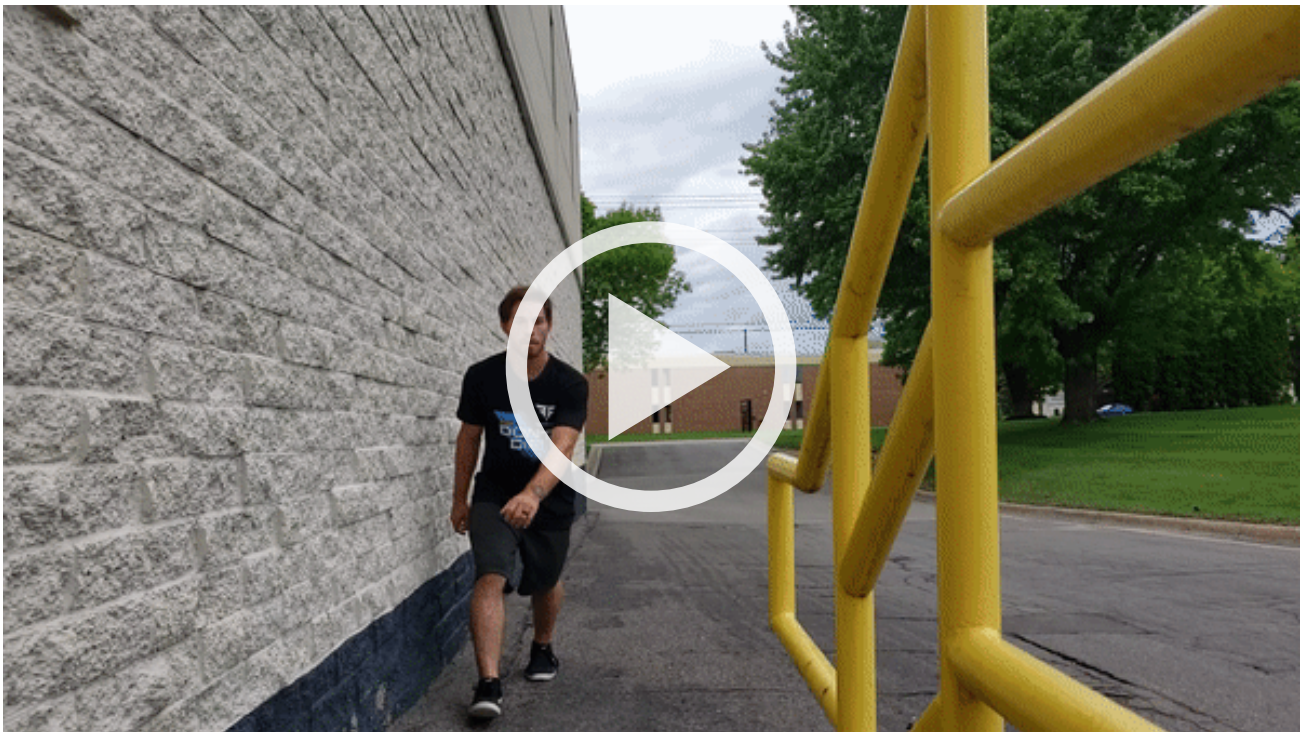
OUR STUDENTS

"I have been doing parkour for years all over the world but never have I seen a club so organized and dedicated as this"

ジョジ

The Parkour mantra has always been if you don't have a Parkour spot, *find one*. If you can't find one, *make one*. If you can't build one, *work with what you've got*. You really can do Parkour anywhere. Don't worry, we'll teach you how!

It's easy to get caught up in the idea that you need some amazing Parkour spot to have a good training session. It just isn't true. Everywhere you go, there are places to train. The issue is that you probably just aren't seeing them. They're around, but your brain isn't recategorizing spaces into Parkour spots. Most people don't look at a handrail and a wall and start drooling, seeing all of the potential.



Fight or Flight Academy Online Coach Luke Albrecht can make some amazing lines without much to work with!

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

I'll tell you how to find great spots to train at, but first we need to get something out of the way. ***Public vs. Private Property***. This is a really important element of where we train.

To start, unless the rules of the area say otherwise, you are 100% free to practice Parkour on public land. Public land is really anywhere that isn't "owned" by anyone, or isn't the property of an entity. There are places, such as a public library, that seems like public land, but is actually city property. Most of the public places you'll train at will be public parks.

In most states in the USA, citizens have a right to recreational use of public land. It might be a good idea to do some research on your local laws. That way, if someone is pressuring you to leave, you can cite your legal rights to show them why you aren't doing anything wrong. A lot of people don't understand what Parkour is, and their reactions can vary a lot!

Private Property is a different animal. In short, just being on private property isn't wrong. The issue is when you go onto property that is clearly private and marked as such. If that is the case, or when you are asked to leave and you don't, it becomes trespassing.



*If you see one of these, you won't have many excuses if you get caught training on the other side of it!
Photo by Tony Webster*

Most people don't understand what Parkour is and why someone would do it. You may feel like you're innocently standing on a wall or vaulting a handrail. People that don't do Parkour may not see it that way. If you're asked to leave, the best thing to do is to be respectful to the person asking you, and make it clear you are going to leave. Then leave.

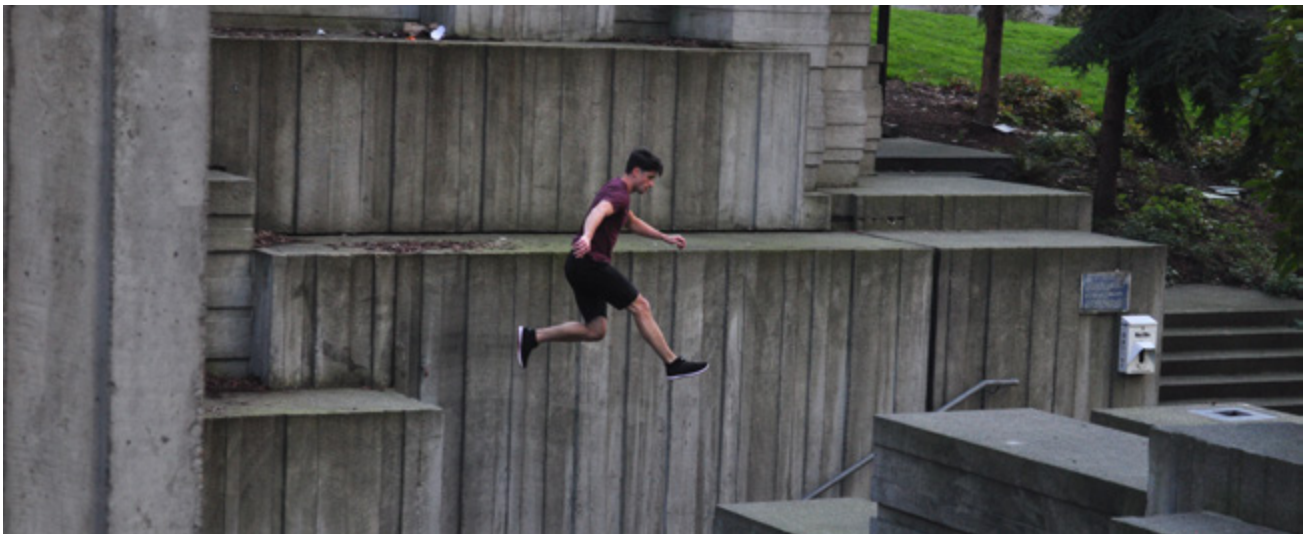
If you feel comfortable, and that the situation is right, opening a conversation about what you were doing can be a good move. Make sure whoever is kicking you out doesn't feel that you are "talking back." Again, be respectful, leave right away, and if there's a space for it, have a conversation on your way out.

A great example of what can happen with that is with team Storrer at their spot called "Redhill." By always being respectful to the property owner, that person allowed them free use of the spot. They made it clear that they were respectful of him and the property, and they ended up getting a Parkour haven out of it.

FIND A COOL SPOT

Look, I know that's a lot of information. You know what's great about it, though? That should be almost all of the information you need on where you can train, other than the types of locations that are good for training. So...let's talk about those!

Firstly, we have public parks. Public parks are a great option, because you have full rights to training in them. As long as you are obeying park rules and following the law, you can pretty much do whatever the hell you want. Public parks aren't just playgrounds or hiking spots. Lots of public parks have awesome urban features. Some of the best spots in the world are fountains, for example.



*Freeway Park in Seattle, Washington. A public park with an expansive fountain that's great to play on.
Photo by Joe Mabel*

University campuses are another great option. For some reason, they frequently have a lot of unique architectural features. The exact reason why isn't certain, but it seems to be a desire for opulence, and presumably a high budget for buildings. The other awesome thing? Campuses are usually fairly sprawling. That means you'll have a big area, rich with good obstacles. We highly suggest exploring your local college campuses.



Williamson Hall at the University of Minnesota, photographer unknown

Do remember, college campuses are not public property in the same way a park is. If a campus police officer kicks you out, you have to listen to them. And be nice!

Some of the best training also happens on the most natural features. Rocks and trees force you to be more creative in the way you move. Their uneven surfaces and organic shapes make for unusual challenges. Plus, it really feels like you're tapping into a primal part of yourself. It brings you to thoughts of running, full sprint, straight through dense forest, just flowing through the landscape and taking things stride by stride.

Gyms are another great resource. Places like **Fight or Flight Academy** provide a unique feature to Parkour training. They're realistic spaces, but they're designed to allow you to learn in them more easily. Wood is hard, but not as hard as concrete! Having mats around to learn flips onto is also really handy. Plus, if you're at a gym, you can probably learn from a coach!



Fight or Flight Academy in Edina, Minnesota

Lastly, we'll talk about the "nothing spots," like the spot with the yellow rail that Luke Albrecht made a line on, back on page 16. These are spots that have minimal features. They aren't sprawling public parks or campuses with a bonanza of amazing features. They're simple stair sets with retaining walls, a picnic table, even lines in a parking lot.

We highly suggest getting used to training at places like these. By doing so, you won't ever have a limit on where you can train. If you can get yourself learning, playing and sweating, all with one single handrail, wait until you go back to a super spot.

Our best suggestion is not to worry about finding an amazing spot. Just explore, and if you see anything to do somewhere, go do it! You'll train your brain to see more spots. You'll find hidden gems that are better than you initially thought. By finding things to do at any spot, you'll become super well rounded and be able to make the most out of any session.

LET'S MOVE!

What will be the first things you'll learn in Parkour?

For starters, landings and breakfalls. You're going to be landing when you do, well, anything. You'll be falling a lot, too. Don't get scared! Falling is a really great skill to have. Like most people, you'll probably be scared to learn breakfalls at first, because it's pretty logical to avoid falling.

If you never fall, you'll never get hurt, right? **WRONG!** What happens when a fall is catastrophic? By training your reflexes to fail in a calculated way, you'll minimize danger. Not just when you do Parkour, either. Slipping on ice, falling off of your bike, stuff like that. We even have a name for this stuff, *Ukemi*, the martial art of falling.

Come on, tell me the moves!



Fight or Flight Academy owner Chad Zwadlo doing a slap-out landing

For breakfalls, you'll want a basic frontwards, sideways and backwards breakfall. These take a long time to master, but it's important to start practicing right away.



Proper backwards breakfall technique



Proper front breakfall technique



Proper sideways breakfall technique

THE THREE RULES OF FALLING:

- #1** - Protect Your Head at All Costs.
- #2** - Don't Reach - don't reach your limbs out to stop a landing. This is how you break arms.
- #3** - Avoid Hard Contact Points - landing on your forearms feels a lot better than your elbows.

There's one last thing about the rules of falling - you can always sacrifice the lower rule to keep yourself from breaking the higher rule.

If you need to land on your elbow or knee so that you don't break a bone, that's fine. Sure it may hurt, you might even get a bruise or a cut, but better than a broken wrist, right? Past that, if you need to reach out with your arms to protect your skull, and you break your arm? Probably worth it. Sure, breaking your arm is pretty rough, but it's better than breaking your face!

Balance is another important skill for starters. You can practice balance anywhere, you don't even need any obstacles. Work on your one legged balance. Put yourself into reactive balance situations, where you are slightly off-balance and readjusting to find your equilibrium.



Fight or Flight Academy student Joe Klinkner balances across a rail at a playground

Try standing on handrails, walking on walls, or pacing along a curb. You can find balance challenges everywhere. Do them! They make you stronger, your joints more stable, and increase your bodily awareness. Plus, it helps you get better at falling safely!

Precision Jumps are a huge part of Parkour. All that a precision jump is, is jumping to a specific obstacle. Foot placement is king here, the idea is to land with the balls of your feet on the edge of the thing you're jumping to. It engages all the muscles in your legs so you can absorb the impact properly.



Chad Zwadlo doing a precision jump at Peavey Plaza, a public park in Minneapolis, Minnesota

We *love* precision jumps, they're absolutely everywhere! You can practice them on lines in a parking lot, or do a precision jumping workout on some stairs. Go jump on stuff!

Another important skill to start learning early in is the ***Parkour Roll***. Though not as sweet as a cinnamon roll, a Parkour Roll is still extremely satisfying to execute well. The reason you need to start doing them right away is because they take years to master. Don't be discouraged, though! Mastering a Parkour Roll is one of the most personal journeys for learning any move in Parkour, because no one can tell exactly how your roll feels for you.



Chad Zwadlo doing a Parkour roll at Scholar's Walk, University of Minnesota

Out of all of the basic movements, it involves listening to your own body the most. Plus, once you've got it pretty good, people are going to have their minds blown by the height of stuff you can effortlessly jump off of. Airtime is fun, baby!

Vaults are another core movement to starting Parkour. Vaulting is simple, it's using your hands to get over an obstacle. Just jumping over it? Not a vault. *You've got to use your hands.*



Chad Zwadlo doing a step vault

Why use your hands, though? One big reason: control. By using your hands, you can do vaults at varying levels of power, to go up or take drops, redirect your movement, or land into precisions.

Vaulting is probably the most diverse part of the basic Parkour vocabulary, and you will work on getting better at vaults from the day you start doing Parkour and forever after that.

Climbing is the last basic piece of the Parkour vocab. Most of what you'll be focusing on at first is the *climb up*. It's really hard. It's 90% or more a strength-based move. If you have the strength, the technique is quite easy. If you don't have the strength, you won't get it.



Chad performs a cat grab (the jumpy part) and a climpup (the climbing up...part)

There are plenty of exercises, like negatives or assisted climb ups, that can improve your strength for a climb up. Other climbing movements include wall runs and dynos. Pretty much any move that involves getting up stuff is what we categorize as climbing.

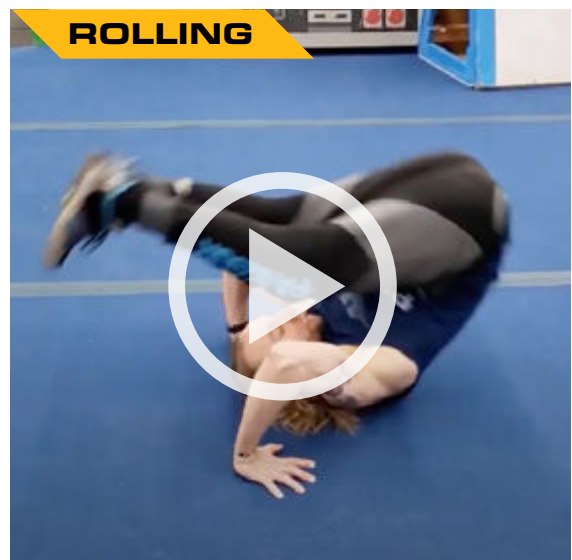
WORKOUTS

We wanted to give you some free resources to get yourself moving.

Here are some videos from our Quarantine workouts series. The original idea of these workouts was to create effective workouts that used Parkour movements, with no equipment.

All of these workouts are simple, basic, and really only require open space. These will be a great start for you to get moving, and learning some of the Parkour basics!

So what you waiting for? Get clicking, and get moving!





PIECE TOGETHER THE PUZZLE

The next step to this process of learning Parkour is to take all of those things above, and put them together. You'll want to work on everything. You will absolutely find stuff that you like to train more than other things, and that's to be expected. However, you should focus on having some elements of all of those categories in most training sessions. You'll become more well rounded, strengthen your whole body, and get used to being in a lot of new situations.

Now that we've arrived here, we're going to revisit the definition of Parkour:

You may have already realized, most of this doesn't sound like you're always just going from Point A to Point B. It seems more like there's drilling and repetition of moves that make you good at that, right? Right! So, our update definition can go something like this:

Parkour is training your body to go from Point A to Point B as quickly, safely and efficiently as possible, while using your body to overcome any obstacles in your path.

With the old definition, drilling a movement to polish your technique isn't really "Parkour," but with this new definition, it is! Neat!

DEALING WITH THE INEVITABLE: HOW TO PROCESS FEAR

OUR STUDENTS

“It looks intimidating until you walk in the door. The guys here are so nice and very knowledgeable. They can walk you through the moves progressively until you are doing things you never thought you could in a short time.”
Kirsten H

The battle between your brain and your body will be ongoing for as long as you do Parkour. There will be moments all of the time that will make you scared. You may even be scared of doing something you know you're capable of doing. All of this is extremely normal.

When you're starting out, it's best for you to just overcome fear in the way that is easiest for you. There are lots of exercises and tools you can use to more effectively conquer fear, but it's tough to apply them when you are still just getting used to being scared. That's a key phrase, by the way.

Get used to being scared.

You *want* to be scared. It proves that you're logical and human. Being fearless is probably the biggest danger in Parkour. Being scared just means that you're smart. Arguably, the smarter you are, the harder it is to learn, say, a back flip.

Back flips make no sense from a survival perspective. Why would you throw all of your weight over your own head, towards a place you cannot see? Nothing about that screams “*yes, this is how to stay alive.*” Hell no!

Over time, you'll develop your own process for overcoming fear. For now, we suggest breaking down scary challenges in this way:

First, assess if you *can* do the challenge. If it seems outside of your abilities outright, don't worry, that's okay. You probably just don't have any business trying it today. There's always tomorrow.

Secondly, eliminate variables. All of the little details running through your head, freaking you out? Reduce them with logic. Worried about slipping on the landing? Brush off the rubble and dust. Scared you won't make the jump? Line it up somewhere, or progressively work up to it from smaller jumps.

By eliminating the variables that will make you fail, you can take more control of the situation. You build up your confidence this way. Think *"if only THIS variable wasn't true, then I would do this challenge easily."* If you can eliminate that variable, the challenge is yours!

Lastly, if you *can* do it, you *must* do it. This is about training your brain. Your brain likes to make patterns and condition itself. If you walk away from every scary challenge, you'll be more willing to walk away again.

Alternatively, if you always go through the process, overcome your fear and get those scary challenges, your brain will become more comfortable in that space. It's not about pressure or shame, it's not like you're less of a person for walking away. It's just another form of training, of bettering yourself.

LEAVE NO TRACE

But actually.

You shouldn't ever be leaving a spot in rougher shape than you found it. If you can, leave it better than you found it. Our training spots are our dojos, temples. Treat them nicely! Try not to break stuff, and if you do, try your best to fix it. Is the spot covered in litter? Come back with a trash bag!

The more care you put into your spots, the more the public will see your respect for the space. A lot of the battle Parkour faces with the public is one of optics.

Speaking of the public, what the heck do you do about people around you when you're training? A lot of the time, passersby will just ignore you. It's most people. These people have the right of way, and you owe it to them not to put them in danger.

Please, don't jump over people's heads that don't know you're there. Let people walk through before you do your cool thing. Ultimately, most passersby are using features like a sidewalk or handicap ramp the *intended* way, so let them do so.

HARDCORE PARKOUR!



From *The Office*, GIF by reddit user *ThtDAmbWhiteGuy*

Thanks to *The Office*, this is a reality. People will just scream “*PARKOUR!*” or “*HARDCORE PARKOUR!*” at you. Yeah, it’s dumb. People are going to do it. Don’t be mean to them, usually it’s best to just ignore them.

“Can you do a backflip?”

Everyone seems to want to know. For whatever reason, you could be doing the craziest double-quadruple-mega-twisting-awesome-flip that’s 1000 times harder than a backflip, and people will only care if you can do a backflip. The same happens when you’re starting Parkour. People just assume that Parkour = backflips. You don’t owe them anything, so don’t feel bad if you don’t do a backflip for them. Your training is for you, not them.

“Can I film you?”

You will be asked this. It's up to you. A lot of people may not even ask. Whatever you are comfortable with is okay, and remember, you don't owe them anything. This isn't an attitude issue. If they are making you uncomfortable, it's important to remember that you can let them know.

“YoU'rE gOiNg To HuRt YoUrSeLf!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”



via GIPHY

Thanks, Karen. As ridiculous as it sounds, people will sometimes get really, really concerned about your personal health. It isn't rooted in logic. This type of person obviously doesn't understand that you are aware of your own decisions. Or maybe they are. It doesn't matter.

Why? Because this person is usually just someone who thinks you're disturbing the peace, or something like that. They don't actually care about your health. They're just mad at you for jumping around and they don't really know why.

ENCOUNTERS OF THE PARKOUR KIND

Sometimes, you run into someone else doing Parkour. It's usually pretty great. Parkour people are friendly! They're probably just out, having a great time, doing their thing. If you want to train with them, you should try! It's a great way to make friends, plus you'll probably learn a thing or two. Just be respectful - duh!

The Noob

Sometimes you'll bump into someone who sees you training, is interested, and wants your help to learn. You should only ever teach someone a move you're very comfortable teaching. People coach each other in Parkour all of the time. It's pretty natural. You can probably teach a step vault right after learning it.

Remember the burden of a coach. You owe it to your students to do everything in your power to keep them safe. You know what else you could do? Send them to Fight or Flight Academy Online! That way you won't have to worry about teaching them, and they'll have a great resource. Heck, send them this book!

The God

You may also run into someone **way** better than you. Once you're done wiping your drool, do this: be inspired. Don't look at their amazing tricks and think *"ugh, they're so much better than me. I'll never be that good."* Instead, consider the massive amount of work that went into their skills. Most things in this sport don't come easy, so any difficult tricks easily demand respect. It takes practice and dedication to learn that stuff. Nothing is off limits for anyone, as long as you put in the time.



Fight or Flight Academy team member Holden Hagerman training at Peavey Plaza, Minneapolis, MN

So what's the best thing you could do if you see someone like this training near you? Go join in! Go learn! Go have fun! Even if this person isn't actively teaching you, seeing the way they move, interact with the environment, even the way that they see, can teach you a lot.

Respect my authoritah!

At some point while you train Parkour, *you're going to interact with a cop* because of it. Usually, the cops are really cool. They're used to dealing with stuff many levels higher on the BS scale. Some dude jumping around on some walls? Who cares. That's usually their attitude.



via GIPHY

Know your rights.

If you can cite specific laws or statutes as to why you're within your legal rights, usually the cops will let it rest quite easily. Sometimes this isn't the case. Use your spidey-sense to detect whether or not you should fight it. The goal here is to avoid causing a scene. There's plenty of other places to train. Plus, if you're really nice to the cops, they'll be less concerned about you in the future.

604A.20 POLICY.

It is the policy of this state, in furtherance of the public health and welfare, to encourage and promote the use of land owned by a municipal power agency and privately owned lands and waters by the public for beneficial recreational purposes, and the provisions of sections [604A.20](#) to [604A.27](#) are enacted to that end.

A Minnesota state statute on recreational use of public land. Check your local government's laws to see what similar statutes exist to protect your right to train on public lands.

Private security, on the other hand, is usually not so nice. They usually come up to you already intending to kick you out. If you're on private property that they are the guard for, there's really nothing you can do if they want you gone.

As we talked about earlier, if there's space for a conversation on your way out, have one! Be kind, and help to educate them on what you're doing, and why it isn't harmful. Sometimes security can be understanding, and other times they just assume the worst with whatever you're doing. If you can be respectful and show them what it is you're actually doing, they might let you stay! There's no harm in it, as long as you aren't tone deaf to the situation.

OUR STUDENTS

"Now, years later, I am teaching alongside those who taught me. I am bringing others along in the journey that I started so long ago. Watching new people get excited about their first underbar, or the first time they got on top of the 7' box...is such a fulfilling experience for me."

Kim DeRider

Neato

We made it! After covering a lot of ground, you should know most of the basics of Parkour. How it started, what you need to do it, how to learn, where to train, who you can train with, and a few other nice tips and tricks for the situations you'll likely run into.

The biggest hope we have here at **Fight or Flight Academy** is that we've shown you just how easily you can start doing Parkour *right* now.

We want to show the world that Parkour is for everyone, big or small, young or old, sedentary or fit. There's a place for anyone in the Parkour community, and we are so ready to help you start learning.

So get out there, go play around, go learn something about your body. We'll be right here to help you learn every step of the way.

And as always, remember Rule #8:



**DON'T
DIE!**

BECOME A FIGHT OR FLIGHT MEMBER!

Now is the time! If you made it through this book, we're sure you're interested in trying out some Parkour yourself. If this is true, the best thing you could do now is to get started with **Fight or Flight Academy**. If you're near our gym in Edina, Minnesota, COME IN! For everyone else (heck, even the people who can come to the gym), **Fight or Flight Academy Online** will be your ultimate solution. The benefits of learning Parkour are clear, and **Fight or Flight Academy Online** leverages the best coaches backing up the highest quality Parkour tutorials ever made.

When you join, you'll be getting access to all the best things Parkour has to offer:

A community with deep roots, full of all types of people. We're a weird and fun loving bunch, and we won't apologize for it.

Coaching from the best coaches in the world. From influencer-level professional athletes, to career Parkour coaches. Get 1-on-1 feedback about your own training, and guidance on your direction. You'll never be led astray!

Of course, our video library. To date, no one has undertaken the project of creating such a vast and high-quality collection of videos to teach people Parkour. Believe us when we say it, you'll be impressed.

We could go on and on about all of the benefits you'll see from joining **Fight or Flight Academy Online**, or...we could just tell you to try it and find out yourself!

BECOME A MEMBER!

FOLLOW US ONLINE:

