

Parkour

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Parkour is the art of moving from one area to another as quickly as possible, using only the human body and one's surroundings. A training traceur (or traceuse, if female) can practise in urban and rural areas - even in their own home, or garden. This sport requires equal amounts of speed, strength and balance, but makes any freedom fighter ten times more annoying to the pigs. Much of this article is edited wikipedia content.

It is considered by many practitioners as more of an art and discipline. According to parkour sport founder David Belle, "the physical aspect of parkour is getting over all the obstacles in your path as you would in an emergency. You want to move in such a way, with any movement, as to help you gain the most ground on someone or something, whether escaping from it or chasing toward it."

Movements

There are fewer predefined movements in parkour than gymnastics, as it does not have a list of appropriate "moves". Each obstacle a traceur faces presents a unique challenge on how they can overcome it effectively, which depends on their body type, speed and angle of approach, the physical make-up of the obstacle, etc. Parkour is about training the bodymind to react to those obstacles appropriately with a technique that works. Often that technique cannot and need not be classified and given a name. In many cases effective parkour techniques depend on fast redistribution of body weight and the use of momentum to perform seemingly impossible or difficult body maneuvers at speed. Absorption and redistribution of energy is also an important factor, such as body rolls when landing which reduce impact forces on the legs and spine, allowing a traceur to jump from greater heights than those often considered sensible in other forms of acrobatics and gymnastics.

According to David Belle, you want to move in such a way that will help you gain the most ground as if escaping or chasing something. Also, wherever you go, you must be able to get back, if you go from A to B, you need to be able to get back from B to A, but not necessarily with the same movements or passemants. This brings up the newbies rule of thumb. Don't jump off anything you can't climb up. If it's an 8 foot wall and you can't get up it, you're probably not in shape to jump off it. If it's 15 feet and you're comfortable going up, then fuck you can probably make it down.

Despite this, there are many basic techniques that are emphasized to beginners for their versatility and effectiveness. Most important are good jumping and landing techniques. The roll, used to limit impact after a drop and to carry one's momentum onward, is often stressed as the most important technique to learn. Many traceurs develop joint problems from too many large drops and rolling incorrectly. Due to large drops parkour has sometimes received concerns for its health issues. There is yet no careful study about the health issues of large drops, and traceurs stress gradual progression to avoid any problems. American traceur Mark Toorock and Lanier Johnson, executive director of the American Sports Medicine Institute say that injuries are rare because parkour is based on the control of movements not on what cannot be controlled.

The majority of injuries are sprained ankles and bruised arms/legs (bone bruises). Be careful to give yourself extra time to recover, particularly from sprains, as the part of your body will be temporarily weakened. Sometimes after a significant impact you will feel a weakness in the muscle surrounding the area: generally giving it a minute or two to rest will get you back in shape to move to a safer location. Even a few seconds pause will help you catch your breath and regain concentration after a fall, if you really have to move.

Basic movements

There are many movements in parkour but be aware that it is the combination and effective use that makes it superior - if you're on the run from the cops you shouldn't be doing fancy moves - common sense is a must when traversing landscape in this way. The basic movements defined in parkour are:

- Landing - Bending the knees when toes make contact with ground (never land flat footed; always land on toes and ball of your foot).

- Roll - A forward roll where the hands, arms and diagonal of the back contact the ground. Used primarily to transfer the momentum/energy from jumps and to minimise impact preventing a painful landing. Identical to the basic Kaiten of martial arts such as Judo, Ninjutsu, Jujitsu, and Aikido.
- Vault - To move over an object with one's hand(s) on an object to ease the movement.
- With two handed vaults, there are essentially three possibilities. Swing both your legs out to the side, one to the side one between your arms, or both between your arms to let you swing through.
- Swinging your legs between your arms is effective when traversing a barrier next to a wall, with one hand on the wall. This maneuver can be combined with a short (one or two steps) vertical wallrun to let you "vault" 6-7 foot obstacles quickly. Practice on a vending machine. Plus it just looks impressive as fuck.
- Wallrun - Taking a step or two up a wall to gain height either to scale an object, clear a gap, or clear a gap.
- Vertical wallruns require sprinting at the wall and planting your nondominant side foot a little over half your height away from the wall. Then the step on the wall is taken that same distance up the wall. One must be careful not to push their balance too far back or they will break off the wall early.
- Horizontal wallruns mean approaching the wall at a 45 degree angle to balance momentum at the wall (for grip) and parallel to it. Be sure you can take at least four steps on the wall moving horizontally before you attempt to clear any gaps.
- Balance - Walking along the crest of an obstacle; literally "balance." Try walking down a length of chainlink... hell of a practice exercise
- Cat balance - Quadrupedal crawling movement along the crest of an obstacle.
- Underbar, jump through - Jumping or swinging through a gap between obstacles. One usually grabs above the opening and swings through feet first.
- Dismount, swinging jump - Hanging drop; *lacher* literally meaning "to let go." To hang or swing (on a bar, on a wall, on a branch) and let go, dropping to the ground or to hang from another object.
- Pop vault, wall hop - Overcoming a wall, usually by use of a kick off the wall to transform forward momentum into upward momentum. A *pas de muraille* with two hand touches, for instance one touch on the top of a wall and another grabbing the top of the railing of the wall, is called a "Dyno". Begin as you would a vertical wallrun.
- Turn vault - A vault involving a 180° turn; literally "half turn." This move is often used to place yourself hanging from the other side of an object in order to shorten a drop or prepare for a jump. You must switch the placement of one hand from one side to the other during this maneuver. Also, use your arms to pull you in closer to the wall so that you can land on a ledge or on a portion of a railing.
- Speed vault - To overcome an obstacle by jumping side-wise first, then using one hand, while in the air, to push your body forwards.

- Thief vault, Lazy vault, switch hands - To overcome an obstacle by using a one-handed vault, then using the other hand at the end of the vault to push oneself forwards in order to finish the move.
- Cat pass/jump or (king) kong vault - The *saut de chat* involves diving forward over an obstacle so that the body becomes horizontal, pushing off with the hands and tucking the legs, such that the body is brought back to a vertical position, ready to land.
- Dash vault - This vault, similar to the lazy vault, involves using the hands to move oneself forwards at the end of the vault. Unlike the lazy vault, one uses both hands to overcome an obstacle by jumping feet first over the obstacle and pushing off with the hands at the end. Visually, this might seem similar to the *saut de chat*, but reversed. David Belle has officially rebuked this vault however, and thus its inclusion as a parkour movement is debatable.
- Reverse vault - A vault involving a 360° rotation such that the traceur's back faces forward as they pass the obstacle. The purpose of the rotation is ease of technique in the case of otherwise awkward body position or loss of momentum prior to the vault. The rotation can be modified to 270 degrees to allow a sharp turn.
- Pull-up or climb-up - To get from a hanging position (wall, rail, branch, arm jump, etc) into a position where your upper body is above the obstacle, supported by the arms. This then allows for you to climb up onto the obstacle and continue.
- Armjump, cat leap - To land on the side of an obstacle in a hanging/crouched position, the hands gripping the top edge, holding the body, ready to perform a muscle up.
- Drop - Literally 'jump to the ground' / 'jump to the floor'. To jump down, or drop down from something.
- Gap jump - To jump from one place/object to another, over a gap/distance. This technique is most often followed with a roll.
- Precision jump - Static jump from one object to a precise spot on another object.
- Tic tac - To kick off a wall in order to overcome another obstacle or gain height to grab something. It's a modification of the wallrun maneuver, and is quite useful for gaining height. The peak of your reach in a wallrun is actually about half your height away from the wall, as you are still applying upward force while leaving the wall.

Accessories

There is no equipment required, although practitioners normally train wearing light casual clothing:

- Light upper body garment - such as T-shirt, sleeveless shirt or crop top. Polyester jackets are okay if you need a little extra warmth or protection without sacrificing flexibility.
- Light lower body garment - such as light pants/trousers or light shorts. Avoid jeans as they restrict your knee movement
- Comfortable underwear.

The actual gear in itself, only consisting of:

- Comfortable athletic shoes that are generally light, with good grip.
- Sometimes, sweat-bands for forearm protection.
- Rarely, thin athletic gloves (with rubber grips exhibiting only a mild adhesion), for protection in much the same ways shoes protect feet, due to the fact practitioners grab hold of abrasive objects (brick walls, fences, etc). Bicycle gloves with open finger tips work, as they have a padded palm, but are designed for flexibility; also the fingertips are open allowing for easier climbing.

However, since parkour is closely related to methode naturelle, sometimes practitioners train barefooted to be able to move efficiently without depending on their gear. David Belle has said: "bare feet are the best shoes!" In addition, it is worth noting that many traceurs feel as though gloves are pointless due to the fact that they rely upon their callouses, I suggest you rely on callouses due to the fact that you may not have gloves with you when you must use pk.

Training Gear:

- Shoes, or barefeet
- Shirt, hoody, jacket, or no shirt depending on what you like to wear and the weather
- Pants, joggers, jeans, swimming trunks, shorts

Truly the point of parkour is to be able to use it at a moments notice to flee your pursuers so I advise training in what you usually wear; and conversely, wear that in which you would train. For example, if you are a student train in your uniform/what you wear to school, the same applies to all professions.

It's doubtful that one would be able to carry much more than a pocket knife while running. Any equipment that is being carried must be strapped tightly in place. The belt (except the back) and possibly chest provide opportunities to store items up against a traceur's body, but any items **MUST** be firmly pressed against the body to prevent bouncing around and leaving bruises.

A scarf is commonly seen in winter, good at keeping you variably warm when needed but can be used during evasion to wrap wire or pad sharp edges it might even be strong enough to throw over a rail and pull your self up in an emergency.

A note on shoes:

If you're doing parkour anywhere near seriously, and you're not going barefoot (think: broken glass, barbed wire, etc.), You'll need to look for a few factors in your shoes. You want:

- Very grippy rubber on the sole. (wallruns, traversing steep roofs, etc) Non-marking rubber soles meant for gym basketball... suck.
- Sole texture must extend over the toe. (wallruns and tic tacs...)
- Similarly to how the sole material extends over the toe of good shoes, this should not be the case on the ankle. (it breaks from landing)
- You want a fairly thick and firm ankle. Around 3/4" of solid rubber over the heel. (landings!)
- Shoes with inbuilt shock absorbers are terrible: they make you tire faster, make it impossible to bike if you need to, and the spring gets compressed all the way from tiny drops and becomes useless past a few feet.
- Many shoes that fit this criteria are expensive. Simply steal them. (walk in with one pair of shoes, leave with another.)
- Note that these criteria can and should be adjusted to each runner's unique style and preferences. (I know a guy who wears combat boots to support his ankles. Another wears skate shoes because he likes the grip offered by a flexible sole. Do some experimenting if you must!)

Surfaces and Structures to Consider

Grass

Grass provides softer landings than concrete, but can also be hiding broken glass, or just be damn slippery. Even a six foot drop paired with unexpectedly slippery grass can mean an ankle sprain.

Chain-Link Fence

- Chain-link is not indestructible. If you weight below 200 pounds and aren't intentionally trying to break it, it probably won't; but it has been proven through author's experience that chain-link will unwind if a couple of average weight guys are intentionally abusive.
- Be careful to look at the top of the fence. You must note whether there are points or not, and whether there is a reinforcing bar running across the top to aid your grip, and make the fence shake less when climbed.
- Fence construction is also significant. Sometimes they have a top bar, but it's merely slid into place on two bolted on mounts. This holds entirely by friction, and has been known to give while a traceur is crossing it.
- If barbed or even razor wire is present it can be a bitch, but this is where awareness of your environment comes into play. A tree or wall near the fence, a structure taller than the fence, or even things such as corner posts or gates will simplify life for you.
- Razor wire is brutal, if you fall in a bunch of it, don't even think about moving (you'll injure yourself more and probably bleed out) and wait for somebody (hopefully a friend, climbing barbed wire does not look good to emergency services) to get the wire out of the way to help you get out.

Buildings

- Wall surface can drastically change your mobility against building. Brick provides a moderately grippy surface; which isn't very abrasive should you need to push off it with bare hands. Rough cinderblock walls provide incredible grip, but aren't mild on the skin. Some cinderblock walls have a mildly shiny paint on them. It eats shoes, slips like hell, and makes the wall a pain in the ass to use for propulsion.
- Roof material varies, but oftentimes: flat roofs are very conductive of sound. Also, flat roofs on smaller buildings don't always hold up well to impact. Sloped roofs are usually sturdier, but present their own series of issues (which should be self evident. Don't fall off and die.).
- Reliability of external structures:

- Avoid putting your full weight on a gutter, it'll break.
- Fire department plumbing, and the valve for the hose tend to be pretty firmly attached.
- Be careful with electrical boxes, they've proven usable, but some have shown signs of strain at 180 pounds.
- Wall lamps break off VERY easily.
- Security camera brackets are solid, the cameras themselves are not.

Emergency Use

You should be constantly identifying all possible routes of access and escape as you move around town in daily activity. As you train thoroughly, this will become instinctive. You will begin to notice: "Hey, I could hop that fence, I can cross that roof, I can cut through those woods...". When it becomes time to move quickly know how and where to ditch your pack or gear if you are carrying any. A toss onto a roof or into dumpster as you begin your evasion gives you some chance of retrieval at a later time, your stuff is not as important as escape in most cases. Carrying your gear while employing emergency parkour is difficult and slows you down when you need to get away. Since Parkour is a come as you are skill similar to hand to hand martial arts you are only as good as your training, so get out and do it every day. As said before it is important for you to evade whatever is chasing you however you may not wish to merely run away. You may wish to lure, assist, or even act as a decoy. Thus several factors come into play in this "controlled" chase.

- Distance - How far away are the people chasing you?
- Speed - How fast will they be able to reach you?
- Ability - Are they going to be able to easily fall into your trap or do they traverse obstacles with ease flawlessly clearing even the toughest of challenges?
- Number - How many people are chasing you?
- Danger - What will these people do to you if you fail?

The point of taking these variables into account is that they allow you to understand your current situation and effectively control it, tailoring the outcome to your individual or group's needs.

If pursued by police vehicles, or if evacuating an area expecting such forces to be deployed, try to move perpendicular to roads, cutting through alleys/yards/woods/whatever stands in your path. If you do so, you are impossible to follow with vehicles, and often concealed from their sight. Hint: crossing an interstate can buy you several miles ahead of a car if timed carefully as to avoid traffic.

KEEP A CLEAR HEAD AT ALL TIMES!!! No matter what do not let your mind stray at any point during the chase or even when training, serious injury or death may occur.

Training

Practitioners generally train in groups or, when said group is unavailable, by themselves. Training with somebody of similar build offers the opportunity for some (non-economic) competition and lets you really push yourself. Usually beginning traceurs should try to find a group near them or read tutorials due to the fact that it is good to have someone around or even a video to critique you. The bulk of a traceur's training should be focused around bodyweight exercises such as the squat, lunge, pushup, pullup, and hanging leg raise. It is also advisable to do some cardiovascular exercise such as running so as to have your skill to be readily usable in an outside environment. Our experience is that much muscle pain and even some joint pain is the result of skipping your stretching at the start of every workout, especially important is stretching the massive muscles of the legs. Failure is not an option.

Warming up is also important to help your muscles achieve their full potential. If you just go outside and start doing wallruns, you'll notice your maximum height increase sharply (up to a meter) over the first 3-6 runs, and decline very very gradually as you tire.

Below will be updated soon.

- Squat
- Lunge
- Pushup
- Pullup
- Hanging Leg Raise
- Additional exercises
- Ankle Raises - Planks - Variations of the squat, pushup, pullup, and hanging leg raise.

Go find something to vault, to wallrun, to climb. Get out there and prepare for the movements by doing them. There is no better way to target the specific muscle groups to the right extent for your individual body.

Some say that eventually parkour will break down your body if done with too much impact or hyper-intensive for too many hours a week; if your body is breaking down or for women your period stops, you're over doing and failing to get proper nutrition. Injuries are the result of mistakes or abuse of your muscles and joints and failure to let them build and heal. This is where planned conditioning and competent coaching comes into play and helps to keep you in the game.

Also note that some sports may help you in parkour. For example after a few months experience rock climbing you will become far more efficient and redistributing your weight and it will come more naturally. Parkour sometimes integrates some climbing movements anyway. Cycling also won't hurt, as it trains some muscles on your legs (although admittedly not all the right muscle groups) and your respiratory system for endurance. Some kiddie sport like airsoft or paintball, although a money whore, will train your awareness of your environment.

Training Grounds

Ideally, you want your whole world to be your training ground, but this isn't always possible. Consider that people call the cops for stupid reasons, that being identified as the traceur isn't always strategically advantageous, and that having people know what paths you're likely to take is an unwanted vulnerability.

Places that work:

- In Front Of Office Buildings: They generally have some rails to play on and you get a nice 15-60 min. training in before you get kicked out.
- Unused baseball fields. They offer you with plenty of chainlink to practice climbing/vaulting. Covered dugouts offer a small structure to practice climbing and rolling off of. Nicer ones may also have small buildings on site that offer you more training material.
- Construction yards and construction storage. Not too far away from me, there is a yard with an utterly massive pile of 1 yard concrete pipes. It is an excellent means to practice moving over a series of obstacles. Also the curved front of a bulldozer is an excellent surface to practice horizontal wallruns on, as the curve makes it mildly easier. Go higher and take more steps as you progress.
- Beware that if you are spotted somebody might call the cops for trespassing. If this happens you can usually just run away, as it is rarely worth the effort to chase you down.
- Empty playgrounds. (scaring children isn't nice... and neither is landing on them.) They usually have low fences to vault, structures one can jump off of, shock absorbing ground if you fuck up, and bars to do pullups and swing on.
- The rear of a strip mall. You get a nice solid wall to wallrun on, nobody else ever goes back there, and if you figure out how: beautiful rooftop view.

Avoid:

- Rooftops for anything but scenery: they WILL conduct the sound of your movements, and you'll get kicked off the property and maybe even the cops called
- Places of excessively high risk: getting injured because your training ground had a concrete surface for rolling instead of grass is fucking stupid
- Private Residences: people will assume you're a thief. not good.

Parkour And Other Martial Arts

Parkour is extremely useful, hell I'd rather run than fight, but if put into a situation where I must take out my opponent, I shall do it without hesitation and without unnecessary harm to my opponent. Parkour and other martial arts compliment one another however this does not mean that they are the same. I recommend Bujinkan for everyone however not everyone wishes to do it, so I leave you with this, if put into a situation where you must run from people that wish to hurt you and you become trapped what shall you do?

1: Put that efficient mindset which is a byproduct of doing parkour to use! Find out the most effective way of taking out your opponent, or, if you cannot take out your opponent, run around.

2: Parkour teaches you how to handle your momentum. If you HAVE TO fight, there are times when it can be used to your advantage. For example: if you learn to reverse out of a wallrun, you can perform a very forceful flying kick when it's least expected.



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