

**ABC News**

# Tired of the Gym? Try The Park Workout

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## Leave the Stuffy Gym, Get Some Fresh Air



By Lori Corbin

**May 16, 2007 (KABC-TV) (KABC) -- You head to the gym after work only to find long lines for the cardio equipment and no space in the weight room. Solution? Take your workout outside.**

Some experts recommend heading to the park for a fun and efficient workout.

A great way to get in shape is walking with Nordic poles. Fitness expert Ken Alan says Nordic walking is great for the novice exerciser. Increasing heart rate, oxygen consumption, burning up to 30 percent more calories than with regular walking.

The only downside is looking silly. By using all four limbs, there is an upper body boost. While most anyone can do it, this is one toy a beginner will find receives maximum benefits.

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Another "anywhere" tool to try is the TRX, or Total Resistance Exercise band. Expert Juliet Kaska says the TRX is idea for those who aren't ready for the gym. Invented by a Navy SEAL, the TRX is a super-strong strap apparatus that can hang from a tree, a hotel, or door.

With more that 300 exercises, the TRX incorporates stretch, Pilates and strength training in one easy-to-carry piece of equipment. The TRX can be used in physical therapy, with the elderly, as well as for extreme athletes.

Both experts say these tools are easy for most anyone to use. The poles cost \$30-\$200, and can be found at most sporting good stores. The TRX is \$149 and can be ordered online.

In the event you want to be fit for free, take yourself to a picnic bench for a few exercises. For instance:

**ELEVATED KNEE LIFTS:** Put one foot on the bench seat with the other foot on the ground. Lift the bottom knee up to waist level as

you stand on one leg on the bench. Come back down into a half-squat position. Repeat for three sets of 12 repetitions to work your hips, glutes, thighs and cardiovascular fitness.

**PRONE LEG LIFTS:** Stand at one end of the table where there is no bench. Bend over with stomach and torso on tabletop with arms holding on to the table sides. Tighten stomach muscles and lift legs up to tabletop height and then back down to the ground. Repeat three sets of eight repetitions. This exercise strengthens spinal extensors while working the glutes and hamstrings.

**TABLETOP PUSH-UPS:** Place hands shoulder-width apart with body at a diagonal and feet on the ground. Bend elbows to a right angle with chest almost touching the table. Push back up until arms are straight. Repeat three sets of 12. This workout taxes the chest muscles.

**TRICEP DIPS:** Sit on the bench facing away from the table with hands gripping the bench right next to hips. Scoot glutes away from the bench, slightly bending and straightening the elbows.

This exercise works on the upper back part of the arm called the triceps. Do three sets of 12 repetitions.

Perhaps one of the best reasons to take exercise outside is that you work harder. Some studies show that people push a bit harder in the great outdoors. The price is right and the weather is great, so why not pump it up at the park?

For more information about Nordic Walking:

## **Nordic Walking: Tips to Get Started**

By Ken Alan, ACE-Certified Personal Trainer

Department of Kinesiology, California State University Fullerton

[www.kenfitness.com](http://www.kenfitness.com)

Nordic Walking allows you to use your arms to help propel yourself forward as you walk. The poles, one in each hand, extend your arms down to the ground, giving you 4 limbs to walk on instead of two.

Just like a car in 4-wheel drive has more power on the road, using walking poles gives you more power for your walk. Studies have shown that you'll increase your heart rate, consume more oxygen, burn more calories, and get an upper body workout, too. Nordic Walking is excellent for anyone with joint pain, balance problems, or recovering from injury. Here's how to do it.

### **Nordic Walking in 4 Easy Steps**

#### **1. Walk This Way**

The best way to learn Nordic Walking is to start walking without poles. You need awareness of your natural walking gait, rhythm, and especially your arm motion. Notice as one leg steps forward, the opposite arm always swings forward. Nothing changes when you use the poles.

#### **2. It's a Drag**

When you first begin to use the poles let them drag behind you as you walk. Don't even grip them. Let them hang by the strap. Make sure your walk is natural - opposite arm swings forward to the opposing leg stepping forward. This is a key element.

### **3. Poles Posterior**

Grip the poles lightly and begin to apply a slight pressure back as the arm swings back downward. Maintain the drag of the poles. The poles always stay diagonally in back of you.

### **4. Nordic Walker**

The tendency when Nordic Walking is to bring the poles forward. Don't. Always let them drag behind you or lift them up slightly as your arm swings forward, but never place the pole in front of you, otherwise you can't push back on the pole. Anytime you lose your natural arm swing, relax completely and drag the poles until you get your natural arm rhythm back. Once you get the hang of it, you'll never want to walk without your poles. For those familiar with Pilates, you'll feel your core muscles naturally engage when using the poles. The hardest part in learning Nordic Walking, is remembering it is just like regular walking!

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE TRX:

### **Chris Camacho, MA, CSCS**

Director - Sports & Fitness

Fitness Anywhere, Inc.

310-642-5900 (O)

310-923-0858(M)

415-358-9090 (F)

[www.fitnessanywhere.com](http://www.fitnessanywhere.com)

### **Juliet Kaska's Emerson Hall Fitness**

8816 Melrose Ave

West Hollywood, CA 90069

(310) 274-0700

[www.emersonhallfitness.com](http://www.emersonhallfitness.com)

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