

## PROTECT YOUR PARKS

The Park System preserves and manages natural and cultural resources on more than 13,000 acres of land in Monmouth County. Protecting water quality, eliminating invasive plant species, and promoting healthy wildlife habitat and populations are just a few objectives. Please help protect the parks by leaving flowers, plants, animals, and other features as you found them; adhering to the posted park rules; using designated containers for trash, recyclables and pet waste; and keeping your pets leashed. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted. The parks are maintained and patrolled by uniformed Park Rangers.

**An over abundance of white-tailed deer in and around the parks is threatening the health of native plant and animal species. Portions of some county parks may be open for deer hunting during some or all of the State-regulated hunting seasons. All areas open for hunting are clearly posted. For more information, visit [monmouthcountyparks.com](http://monmouthcountyparks.com) or call (732) 842-4000, Ext. 4237.**



Monmouth County  
Board of Chosen Freeholders  
Board of Recreation Commissioners

# WALKING FOR BETTER HEALTH

**Tips for Starting a Walking Program in the Monmouth County Park System**

[monmouthcountyparks.com](http://monmouthcountyparks.com)

## WHY EXERCISE?

According to a report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), regular physical activity has been shown to improve health by<sup>1</sup>

### Reducing the risk of

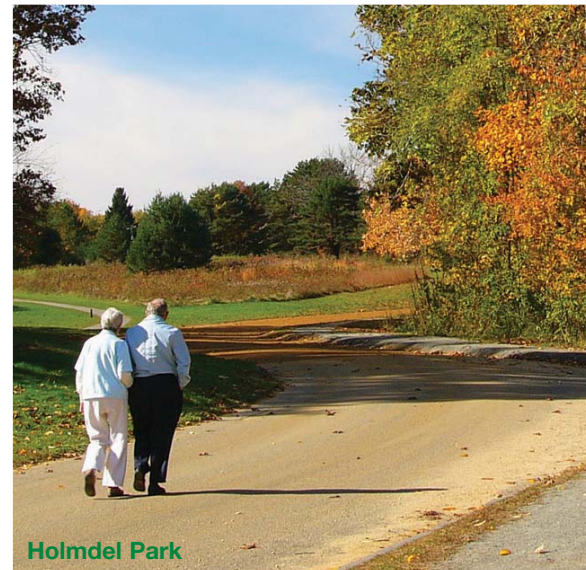
- ♥ Coronary heart disease (CHD)
- ♥ Stroke
- ♥ Second heart attack
- ♥ Colon cancer
- ♥ High blood pressure
- ♥ Type 2 diabetes

### and lowering

- ♥ Feelings of depression and anxiety
- ♥ Stress
- ♥ Total blood cholesterol
- ♥ Triglycerides
- ♥ Blood pressure (in people who already have hypertension)
- ♥ Pain from arthritis<sup>2</sup>

Regular exercise also increases strength and helps maintain a healthy weight, as well as healthy bones, muscles and joints.<sup>1</sup>

It's true that starting an exercise program requires time and commitment, but it may be easier than you think.



Reference:

1. Physical Activity for Everyone. The Importance of Physical Activity: Why should I be active? Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available at: [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/importance/why.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/importance/why.htm). Accessed: March 7, 2006.

2. Physical Activity for Everyone. The Importance of Physical Activity. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available at: [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/importance/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/importance/index.htm). Accessed: March 7, 2006.

## GETTING STARTED

Physical activity does not have to be hard to provide health benefits.<sup>2</sup> A moderate program of brisk walking can still be good for you. Below are some tips to help you get started.

**1. Consult your doctor before starting an exercise program.** Find out if walking is appropriate for your age and level of health.

**2. Find a Place to Walk.** There are more than 110 miles of trails in the Monmouth County Park System. Consult the map inside to find a park near you.



**3. Grab a Partner/Establish a Group.** There are many good reasons to have company while you walk; safety, motivation, socializing, etc.

**4. Begin Slowly...and Work Your Way Up.** Start by walking once a week; later, add more days until you reach your goal.

**5. Dress for Exercise Success.** Sturdy, supportive walking shoes or sneakers are best for flat or paved surfaces. For more rugged terrain, a hiking shoe or boot is recommended. Also, layer your clothing. As you warm up during the walk, you can remove extra layers for comfort.

**6. Bring Water.** It is important to stay hydrated when you exercise, especially during warm weather.

**7. Pay Attention to the Weather.** After cold, snowy or wet weather some trails may be very slippery, so be careful.



Manasquan Reservoir

## IMPORTANT TIPS!

**Bring a trail map with you.** Park brochures are available at each park (at kiosks/buildings near main parking areas) or by calling (732) 842-4000, ext. 4313. Park maps are also available online at [monmouthcountyparks.com](http://monmouthcountyparks.com).

**It takes about 20 minutes to walk 1 mile (1.6 km) at a brisk pace.** It will take longer at a slower pace.

**Protect yourself from ticks.** Stay away from tall grass and shrubby areas, wear light colored clothes; tuck long pants into socks; and check yourself for ticks during and after each visit to the park.

**Avoid poison ivy.** Stay on the trails— it's your best defense and remember "leaves of three, let it be; hairy rope, don't be a dope; berries white, take flight."

## WHERE TO WALK IN THE MONMOUTH COUNTY PARK SYSTEM

**Please note: trails can be very slippery during cold or wet weather.**

### PAVED TRAILS

- 1. Sunnyside Recreation Area.** This quiet park features a short, 0.5-mile paved loop trail through meadow and field. Continue on the unpaved portion for a longer walk.
- 2. Dorbrook Recreation Area.** This busy park features panoramic views and a paved 2.2-mile trail.
- 3. Thompson Park.** This beautiful park offers a manicured 4.2-mile paved loop trail around the northern half of the park for both long and short walks (portions under construction.) There are also many woody hiking trails and mowed walking paths through fields and meadows.
- 4. Henry Hudson Trail.** The east-west portion of this linear paved trail runs for 9 miles through seven towns of the Bayshore area along Route 36. Heading north-south, parts of the 12-mile expansion trail along Route 79 to Freehold are now open as well. Parking areas are located at points along the trail. **This trail is VERY long; remember to track your time & distance.**

### UNPAVED (NATURAL SURFACE) TRAILS

*Begin on the shorter, well-maintained EASY trails designed for casual walkers.*

- 5. Holmdel Park.** The county's most popular park offers a number of easy trails through woods & water features. Make sure to try the Pond Walk through the Arboretum.
- 6. Huber Woods.** Walk the two easy wooded trails of this quiet park for exercise, and learn about wildlife.
- 7. Manasquan Reservoir.** One of the most scenic places to walk in the county, this park features a 5-mile, loop trail with excellent views of wildlife and birds. **This trail is long; remember to track your time & distance.**

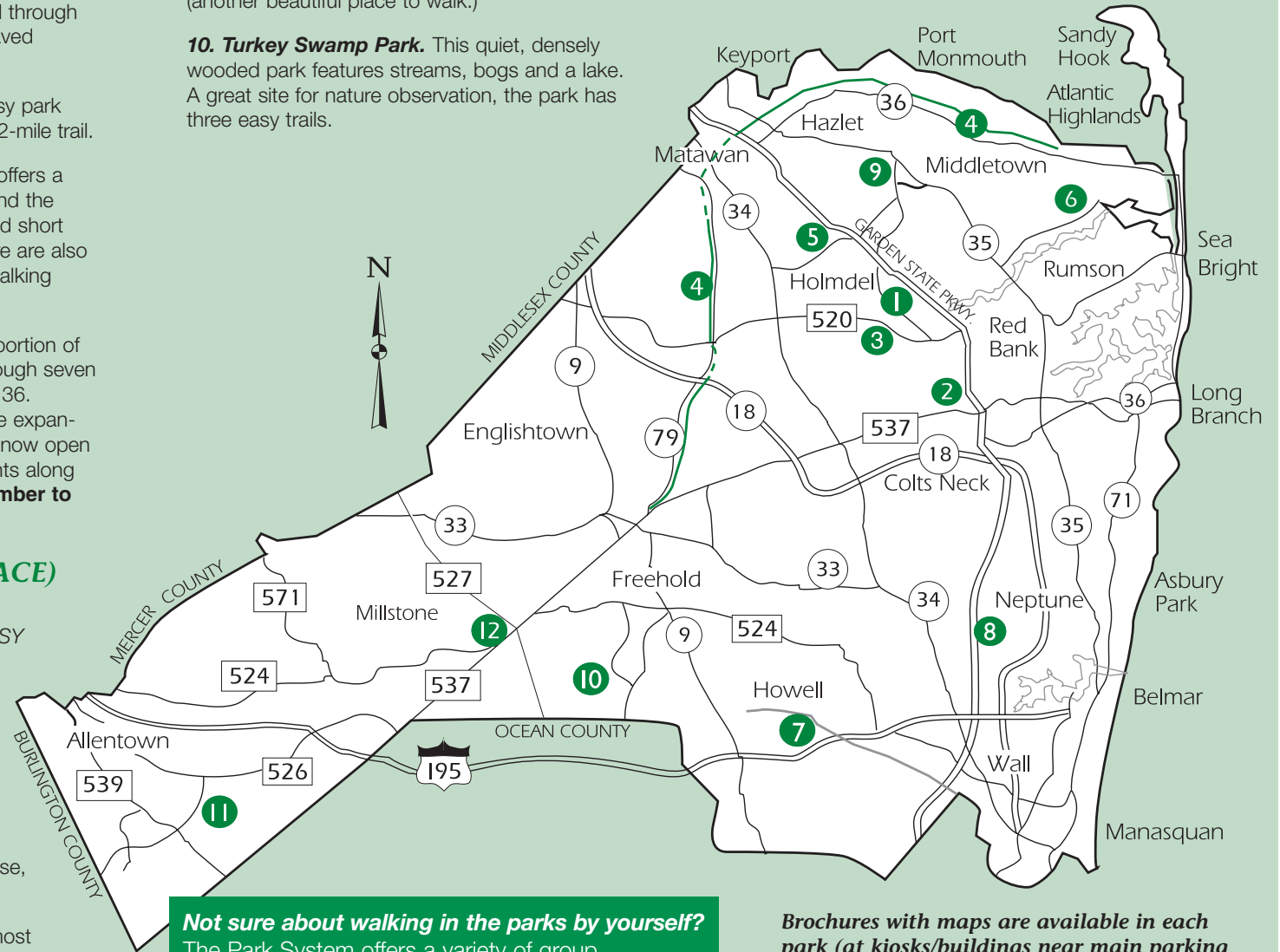
**8. Shark River Park.** The Park System's first and oldest park is characterized by woods, streams, bogs and river. The centrally located 1.4-mile Cedar Loop (and Extension) is an easy trail for walkers.

**9. Tatum Park.** With rolling hills, open fields and winding trails, this is a beautiful and peaceful place to walk. The park features an easy, 0.5 mile trail through a beautiful grove of holly trees and is located across the street from Deep Cut Gardens (another beautiful place to walk.)

**10. Turkey Swamp Park.** This quiet, densely wooded park features streams, bogs and a lake. A great site for nature observation, the park has three easy trails.

**11. Clayton Park.** This quiet, heavily wooded park is known for its beautiful forest and spring wildflower display. Walkers will enjoy the gentle hills of this park's two easy trails. NOTE: It's a remote site, with rustic amenities.

**12. Charleston Springs Golf Course.** The 2-mile Stone Bridge Trail offers a quiet walk with views of Manalapan Brook. Park off Route 524/Stagecoach Road.



**Not sure about walking in the parks by yourself?** The Park System offers a variety of group walking/hiking programs each season. See The Activity Directory—available online, in most parks, or by calling (732) 842-4000, ext. 4313.

**Brochures with maps are available in each park (at kiosks/buildings near main parking areas) or by calling (732) 842-4000, ext. 4313. Park maps are also available online at [monmouthcountyparks.com](http://monmouthcountyparks.com).**