

Explore the park's playgrounds, basketball courts, jogging path, baseball diamonds, tag, and any other fun stuff you can think up. Enjoy your neighborhood green gym! It's tree!

is named for the sunny east-facing cliff that defines its western edge. The hills, steps, and benches make the park a "green gym"—a great place to be physically active, while soaking up nature and spectacular views. This guide provides you with 3 routes for walking or running and 12 exercises and stretches requiring no exercise equipment. Choose a routine to relax and restore you, to strengthen you, or to energize you.

HISTORIC MORNINGSIDE PARK

MORNINGSIDE PARK YOUR GREEN GYM

A Fitness Map and Guide to Morningside Park

WHY OUTDOOR EXERCISE?

We're born to move, and the right activity is fun and satisfying. Exercising in nature feels even better and is extra good for you mentally and physically. No equipment is needed—just use benches, walls, railings, steps, and lampposts.

Being active in a park can help to:

- Boost energy and endurance
- Control weight
- Tone your body and build strong, lean muscle
- Improve flexibility, balance, and coordination
- Prevent and manage many diseases
- Relieve tension and improve your mood and sleep
- Set a good example for kids and create a life-long appreciation for healthy, outdoor activities and the environment

SAFETY TIPS

- If you have a chronic disease see your doctor before beginning.
- Dress for the weather and drink plenty of fluids
- Be alert and aware of your surroundings at all times; avoid earphones
- Exercise with a buddy if possible; stay on well-traveled, well-lit paths
- Play nice! Be considerate of other people using the park. If someone is sitting quietly, move to a different bench or another location

Acknowledgements

This project is 100% funded in the amount of \$10,000 by funding from The Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) – Community Transformation Grant.

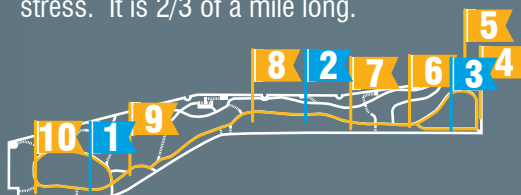
This is a project of the Friends of Morningside Park. Visit us, download the map, and get involved at www.morningsidepark.org
Project originator: Nancy Bruning, www.nancercize.net
Design: Kaja Kuhl, youarethecity

Note: Exercise information and guidelines are based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Sports Medicine.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Pick a path according to your fitness level, your goals, your time, and your preference. Just walking or jogging is a great start; to spice it up and make it more complete, add the color-coded exercises and stretches to improve your strength, flexibility, balance, and coordination. There are instructional banners on the lampposts in the park to remind you of the exercises.

The Serenity Stroll—Low-key and relaxing; the straight, level path includes **3 blue-coded stretches** suitable for beginners, seniors, and anyone who wants to feel less stress. It is 2/3 of a mile long.



The Power Path—All-round complete body workout; brisk walk or run the straight level path with loops at each end, pausing to do **yellow-coded bodyweight exercises** and **stretching exercises**. It is 1 mile long.

The Energy Circuit—Intense, fat-burning, and revitalizing. Travel up and down the stairways through the upper and lower paths of the park, including the **2 red-coded cardio-boosting exercises**; add the others for a total experience. It is 2 miles long.



Mix It Up—Feel free to follow more than one path through the park, including as many of the exercises and stretches as you want; it's best to end with the stretches.

How Much?

Any amount you do is good! But, here are the official recommendations:



Cardio/aerobic (walking, jogging): At least 30 minutes a day of moderate-intensity activity 5 days a week OR: 20 minutes a day of vigorous-intensity activity 3 days a week. (To lose weight and keep it off requires triple and double these amounts, respectively.) Moderate intensity = heart rate (pulse) and breathing increase but you can still talk comfortably. Vigorous intensity = heart and breathing rate increase so talking is difficult.



Strengthening: Do 2-3 days a week, repeating each exercise as many times as you can, without straining. Or, start at the appropriate level of difficulty and aim for 8 repetitions to begin. As the exercise becomes easier, increase the repetitions to 12, and then go up to the next level of difficulty, again starting with 8 repetitions.



Stretching: Stretch after aerobic or strengthening exercise, when muscles are warm. You can also do light stretching as part of a leisurely walk. Do each stretch 3 to 5 times, holding it for 10-30 seconds, taking deep slow breaths as you ease into the stretch.

Challenge yourself—All the exercises and stretches have a moderate version plus a harder and an easier version. Start with the moderate or easy version and then adjust up or down. As you get fitter, increase the difficulty.

Remember: Warm up and cool down with light activity, such as walking and easy arm circles.

USING THE OVERLOOKS

You can use the park overlooks along Morningside Drive as mini-gyms: nice out-of-the way places to exercise solo or in a small group.

After a warm up, start with **the yellow-coded strengthening exercises**, beginning with the large muscles of your lower body, progressing to the core and then upper body strengtheners.

Add the **red-coded exercises for an energy and cardio boost**. Finish with the **3 blue-coded stretches**. You can do these exercises circuit-style, going through all of them once and then repeating the sequence once or twice. Be sure to include the stretches at the end! Invite your friends and family to use the green gym along with you!



STAIRS ARE GOOD

Morningside Park is fortunate in that it has many staircases. Stair climbing is one of the best ways to **get a good cardio workout while strengthening your entire lower body**—quads, hamstrings, hips, glutes and calves. It's a great low-impact alternative to jogging.

In case you're wondering: it's also good for you to go DOWN the stairs. Climbing UP stairs (or walking uphill) is a great way to get a cardio workout and lower your triglycerides, descending the stairs (or walking downhill) is a better way to help control blood sugar—which could help prevent or manage diabetes. Going either up or down helps reduce LDL cholesterol.



HARDER
EASIER

1 Side Stretch

Open up your side muscles and upper body

- Stand tall, one hand on the bench, and inhale
- Exhale, bending sideways, raising free hand over head
- Hold for 3 breaths
- Release and repeat with other side

HARDER
EASIER

Place your palm on the seat instead of the back, push out with your hip
Place your free hand on your hip



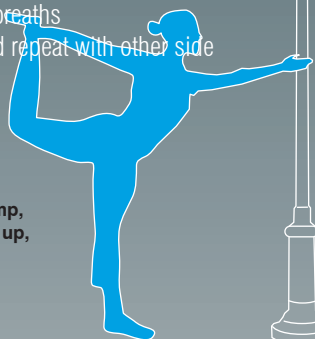
2 Flamingo

Opens hips, legs, shoulders and chest

- Stand tall, one hand holding onto the lamp
- Bend your leg backward and grab your foot or ankle
- Hold for 3 breaths
- Release and repeat with other side

HARDER
EASIER

Let go of the lamp, raise your hand up, and balance
Grab your pant leg or calf



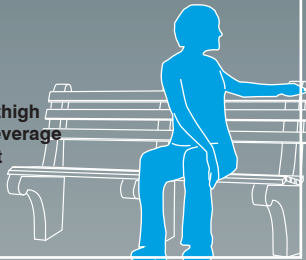
3 Seated Twist

Keep your spine and neck nimble and graceful

- Sit tall on the bench, feet hip-width apart
- Inhale both arms overhead and as you exhale, lower them and twist to one side
- Hold for 3 breaths
- Slowly unwind and repeat on your other side

HARDER
EASIER

Press against your thigh and the bench for leverage to increase the twist
Place your hand on the seat instead of the back



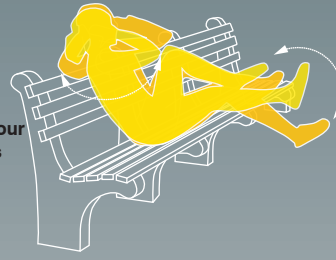
4 Bicycle

Strengthen your abdomen and back

- Sit on edge of bench, hands behind head, leaning back
- Bring one knee up to opposite elbow
- Repeat, alternating legs like pedaling a bicycle
- Repeat as many times as you can

HARDER
EASIER

Pause when your elbow touches your knee
Let feet touch the ground as you pedal



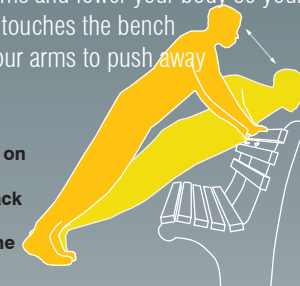
5 Push up

Strengthen and tone your whole body

- Place your hands on the bench, shoulder width apart
- Keep your body straight as a board from head to toe
- Bend your arms and lower your body so your chest lightly touches the bench
- Straighten your arms to push away

HARDER
EASIER

Place your hands on the bench seat rather than the back
Bend slightly at the hips



6 Sit Up

Strengthen your abdomen and back

- Sit on the bench, facing the bench back
- With hands at the side of your head, slowly curl your torso down as far as comfortable
- Curl your torso up
- Repeat as many times as you can

HARDER
EASIER

Pause when your torso reaches the lowest point
Lower your torso less



MORNINGSIDE PARK

YOUR GREEN GYM

SERENITY STROLL

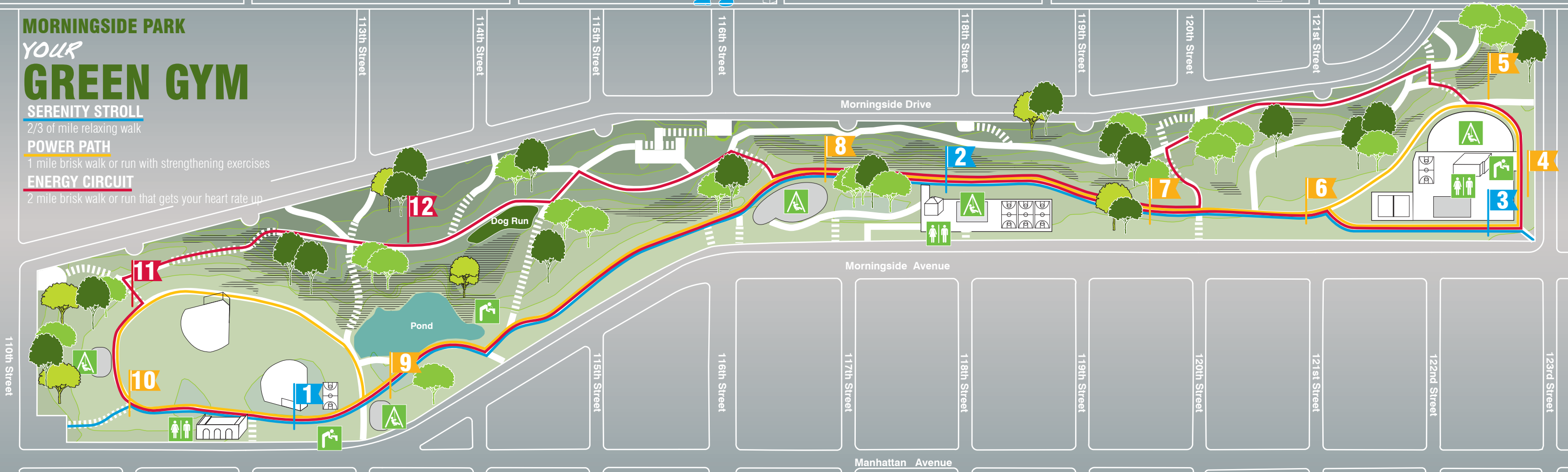
2/3 of mile relaxing walk

POWER PATH

1 mile brisk walk or run with strengthening exercises

ENERGY CIRCUIT

2 mile brisk walk or run that gets your heart rate up



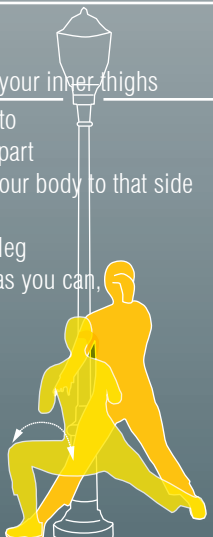
7 Side Lunge

Stretch and strengthen your inner thighs

- Stand tall, feet parallel to each other, a few feet apart
- Bend one knee, bring your body to that side
- Hold for 3 breaths
- Repeat with your other leg
- Repeat as many times as you can, alternating sides

HARDER
EASIER

Let go of the lamp
Bend your leg less



8 Squat

Strengthen your thighs, hips, buttocks and core

- Stand tall, feet hip-width apart, and raise arms to shoulder level
- Slowly lower hips towards the ground as if you were about to sit
- Hold position for 3 breaths
- Stand up and repeat as many times as you can

HARDER
EASIER

Pulse your body up and down an inch or two while squatting
Don't go down as far, or hold it as long



9 Dips

Strengthen your arms, chest, and shoulders

- Sit on the bench, hands on either side of your hips
- Press down and lift your hips off the bench
- Bend your arms, lowering your hips
- Straighten your arms to push back up
- Repeat as many times as you can

HARDER
EASIER

Move your feet further away from the bench
Just dip down a few inches



10 Flying Bird

Lengthen your body, strengthen your core

- Place both hands on lamp and raise one leg straight behind you at hip level
- Release hands from the lamp and balance with your torso and raised leg parallel to the ground
- Hold for 3 breaths
- Release, and repeat with the other leg

HARDER
EASIER

Hold for a longer time
Hold on to the lamp



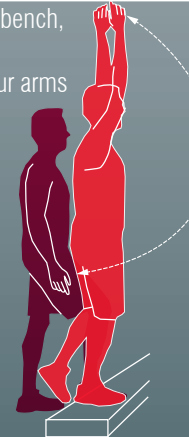
11 Hooray Step-up

Increase aerobic intensity for your upper body

- Step up on a step, curb, or bench, raising arms overhead
- Step down as you lower your arms
- Repeat, using other foot as starting foot
- Keep stepping, alternating starting feet

HARDER
EASIER

Raise your second leg behind you before it steps up
Do this on the flat ground, bending your knees as you step forward with first foot



12 Squat Thrust

Get your heart pumping for energy

- Place your hands on the bench and squat down
- Explosively jump your feet out behind you
- Immediately jump your feet to the starting position and stand up

HARDER
EASIER

Add a jump each time you stand
Instead of a jump, step back alternating legs

