



Park Active

Hyde Park is a fantastic place to get involved with a range of informal activities to keep you fit

By Luke Taylor



Parklife – Get Busy

Hyde Park is a serene 350-acre oasis, right in the center of the Big Smoke. On a recent skate I saw several games of football, touch rugby, cricket, frisbee-throwing, gaining grounds and many other sports. Most were being played in the southern section of the park in an area known as the 'Sports Field'. As I continued to skate around, I noticed I wasn't dodging any runners or cyclists, as the cyclists were using the specially designated roads and runners were keeping to the beaten track. A few minutes westbound and I found myself at the Hyde Park Tennis & Sports Centre. Here people are encouraged to just turn up and play, although there are membership options for regulars. The LTA accredited sports centre has a bowling green and tickets to the putting course can be bought at reception. The park facilities even include a Manege (horse-riding arena) and two designated horse-riding routes. You can just turn up and hire a horse. The Manege is located next to the children's playground at the end of the sports field.

For details on local stables, phone: 020 7723 2813

Wheelie Fun - Rollerblade

I thought I was skating pretty well until I came across a group doing moves on skates that defied the laws of gravity and balance. I was amazed to see how big rollerblading and skating were in London. Think of your favourite sport and you will probably see someone playing it on blades/skates in Hyde Park.

A week is often not enough time for a beginner to learn how to ski and still have time afterwards to enjoy the thrill of whizzing down the slopes. Roller-ski lessons are taught on ski-type rollerblades with the assistance of ski poles to push you along and give you a more realistic skiing experience. The place to do it is at the west end of the Serpentine Road, ten minutes walk from South Kensington or Lancaster Gate tube stations. For further details, phone 07968 286129 or 020 8348 2540. For the more recreational skater who enjoys a chilled skate around town and is quite keen to meet some fellow skaters, why not join the roller-stroll. The group starts the stroll at 2pm on a Sunday from the east side of the Serpentine Road and then go for a leisurely 6-8 mile cruise around town. The only requirement for this is you know how to stop - preferably without taking out anyone or anything in the process. There are many skaters' organisations in London: Citi-Skate, roller-soccer, roller-hockey, roller-disco, the list goes on.

Go to: www.ukisa.org www.theFNS.com www.rollerstroll.com

Push It - Get Milifit!

Tired of monotonous gym routines and not afraid to eat a little dust while getting fit? Then British Milifit might be exactly what you're looking for. The military trained instructors base the sessions on teamwork and lessons are described as fun, challenging and motivational. Classes are catered for every level of fitness and are taught every day but Tuesday. Military trainees meet at the Serpentine Gallery car park on West Carriage Drive. Once you've become a member of BMF, you'll be able to take part in the monthly fitness assessments. These work on a point system - your total points score will help place you in the right class and is a great way to see proof of your improvements. The evaluation is based on an Army fitness test and comprises a series of basic exercises designed to test strength and stamina.

- A timed 1500 metre run (best effort)
- Maximum repetitions of the below mentioned exercises over a two-minute period
- Press-ups, Sit-ups, Burpees (squat thrust then star jump)
- 15 x 20 metre shuttle sprints (best effort)

Further details can be found at: www.britmilfit.com

Chuck your toys - Ultimate Frisbee

Ultimate is a great and refreshing way to use a Frisbee to get fit. Seven players line up on opposite goal lines, 70 yards apart. Points are scored in the same way as American football, with a catch being caught in the end zone, but there are also elements of netball, such as when you catch the disc you must stop where you are and pivot on one foot and you have ten seconds to pass the frisbee. No contact is allowed on another player and possession changes when a pass is not completed (eg. out of bounds, intercepted, dropped or blocked). There's no need to have your own disc, as most of the players take a few with them to practice. Practices are held at the south side of the park near the tennis courts. The Ultimate Players Associations web address is: www.abhultimate.org



Luke Taylor trains his clients at the Imperial Rowing College in Putney, in parks, homes and even in their offices. For more info contact Luke at:

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