**[r/Parkour](https://www.reddit.com/r/Parkour) Guide to Session One**

[Original guide](https://i.imgur.com/t5D7HrM.jpg) by [u/rogueoperative](https://www.reddit.com/u/rogueoperative)

Never practiced before? Stuck in an endless cycle of youtube videos? Can't find a friendly neighborhood traceur to adopt you? Here's some structure so you can go training **TODAY**!

**How to Start Parkour**

**Print this!** This should fit on three pages. Print it, grab some friends, and go outside.

**Choose a training area**

* Look for a playground, fitness trail, natural space, or urban area to train.
* Pick a space where you are not annoying the general public or on private property.
* Check the area before you start for safety hazards like hidden drops, holes, sharp objects, slippery surfaces, etc.
* Pedestrians have the right of way! Don't make people move for you.

**Warm up and stretch**

* Warm up prior to static stretching. Just move around to get your body ready: jumping jacks, jump squats, light jog, etc.
* Ease into each stretch, do not over stretch to where you feel pain.
* Stretch your muscles not your joints!
* Move smoothly and fluidly from stretch to stretch. Don't bounce.
* Keep steadily breathing through the stretches.

**What are we doing today? PARKOUR!**

This is the *Art of Displacement* so that means moving from point A to point B by negotiating the obstacles in between. These obstacles are as much mental blocks as physical objects. For this we train two fundamentals:

* Strength: Keeping yourself strong makes moves easier and helps prevent injuries.
* Skills: Training small basic pieces makes it easier to learn complex movements.

**Let's start! Here's your challenges:**

This is a lab, not a lecture. We want to learn by *DOING*. Read the first challenge then put this page down and do it. After that, read the next challenge.

**1. Build a run**

At your training area stand at a point **A** and look for a point **B** to get to, then navigate between them at a walking pace. You choose the path! It can be a squiggle or straight line, no one's judging. Pay attention to the movements and obstacles that make you feel clumsy or are awkward to traverse.

**2. Repeat the run**

Now look around and try to think of a better way to move through the space. Is there a movement you can try that might get you over troublesome objects a little faster or more smoothly?

Apply your new ideas and techniques on the same run.

**3. Run it backwards**

Second evaluation: What worked? What sucked? With each piece of the run ask yourself if you are lacking strength, skill, or both when you tried to do what you imagined.

Now go from point B to A at the same walking pace.

**4. De-evolve the run**

Think about what was different in the movements you used. Anything new about the route you didn't notice before?

For this challenge start by walking at an even pace, then begin bending at the waist until you're walking on all fours. You should be on the balls of your feet and your hands. We call this quadrupedal movement (QM) and it's a full body workout. You will probably look like a really clumsy Spider-man right now. That's OK, you'll get better.

Move through your earlier route while keeping low to the ground and maintaining three points of contact as much as you can.

**5. Repeat repeat repeat**

What obstacles become easier to cross with QM? What obstacles got harder? Why?

Perform the run faster now that you're familiar with the space. You know the area and the obstacles: your movements should be the ones you found work the best for your strength and skill level right now.

**6. Evaluate**

How did your last run compare to your first run? List three things you progressed on and three you had trouble with. Can you do it better tomorrow? Of course you can, you're a traceur!

**Progressing beyond session one**

From here out you can apply this methodology to new runs. As you learn about different ways to move around obstacles, you will also learn your strengths and weaknesses. Target the things you don't do very well by adding that movement into a run. Here are some things you should focus on when you're new:

**Parkour landings: landing precisely**

Land on the ball of the foot (between toes and arch) and absorb with your legs flexed. Dropping ass to the ground means your joints are taking the impact. Landing flat or on heels means your skeleton is taking the impact.

**Cat hangs: holding on to a wall**

Hands grip the front of the wall with elbows straight and shoulders pulled back. Practice just getting the hands correct first, then lift your legs up one at a time. Knees flared out to get the hips closer to the wall, feet on the wall under your butt. Hold for time and do pull ups as conditioning.

**Parkour roll: avoiding the spine**

Lay gently on your back on grass, mulch, or carpet. Put your hands flat on the floor, and lift your legs to your chest. Explore the different areas of your back that contact the floor as you move your knees around in a circle. Anywhere that hurts is a place you don't want to roll over. Find the diagonal lines of soft tissue that go from shoulder to opposing hip and practice your rolls along those lines.

**Balance: proprioception and dexterity**

In a QM pose, alternate lifting one hand and the opposing leg. On a rail, put one foot on the rail and keep the other leg hanging, then go up on the ball of the up foot and hold it; alternate when you feel a burn in your ankle/foot muscles.

**Conditioning: becoming stronger**

Bodyweight squats, lunges, sprints, step-ups, push ups, QM, running, bicycle kicks, and more can be done as equipment-free exercises. Eventually you will create your own workout routine that suits your body type and goals.