

National

Hiking Draws Younger Crowds Amid Social Distancing

May 16, 2020 08:39

Hiking is no longer the domain of sprightly pensioners but now appeals to younger people who are barred from gyms and other exercise and entertainment by the lockdown.

According to the Mt. Bukhan office, a whopping quarter of a million people visited the mountain in northern Seoul in February of this year, when the epidemic started at 1 percent on-year. There was another explosive increase in visitors in March to 427,000 people as the weather grew warmer. And last month numbers reached almost 500,000.

The trails used to be filled with older hikers in mail-order khakis, but are now overflowing with younger hikers in leggings and bumbags.



Visitors take a picture on Mt. Inwang in Seoul on May 10.

The biggest cause was the lockdown of gyms and other indoor facilities. One 28-year-old office worker visited Mt. Ansan in northwestern Seoul late last month along with other friends. "My colleagues joined me on the hike after fitness clubs across the country closed down," he said.

Social media naturally played a major role. A search on Instagram under related hashtags results in 2.7 million posts, mostly selfies taken on mountain peaks.

Many young Koreans approach hiking like a treasure hunt. One 28-year-old from Siheung south of Seoul hiked along inter-connecting mountain trails along the old Seoul waterway earlier this month.

The Seoul city government presents commemorative badges to people who collect stamps along stopover points along the trail. The hiker said, "I've been hiking up mountains to collect the badges every weekend with my friends. It feels like a video game challenge with different missions."

Koo Jeong-woo at Sungkyunkwan University said, "People in their 20s and 30s are especially receptive to peer pressure, so they have responded quickly to the hiking trend on social media. And from a practical standpoint, it looks like fitness aficionados are increasingly embracing mountain climbing."

PEOPLE



Actress Choi Ji-woo Has 1st Child



Actress Lee Yeon-hee to Tie the Knot Next Month

Most Read

1 / 2

- 1 Foreigners Keep Dumping Korean Stocks



- 2 Dennis Rodman Recalls 'Wild Night' with Kim Jong-un



- 3 Hiking Draws Younger Crowds Amid Social Distancing



- 4 New Soap Becomes Instant Hit Among Salarymen



- 5 Elementary Schoolkids Can Stay Home Even When Schools Reopen

