Physical distancing (also known as “social distancing”) and stay-at-home orders do not mean families have to stay inside - at this point, going outside is allowed. In fact, getting outside is a great way to keep your family physically and mentally healthy during this stressful time. This document includes ideas for staying active outdoors, along with resources for helping kids stay safe while walking and biking. It is best to stay close to your home, some of the greatest walks are right outside your door.

The Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) states you should not schedule playdates, group sports activities, or meet-ups. You should only interact closely with the people you live with. If you see friends and neighbors outside when you are out, wave hello and keep your distance. For up-to-date information, please visit the City of Boston website at www.boston.gov/news/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-boston.

It is very important that while we are outside, we still practice physical distancing and take all of these actions to protect ourselves and others from the coronavirus.

1. **Wash your hands** with soap and water before leaving the house and after you return home
   - Take hand sanitizer with you in case you need it
2. **Wear a cloth face covering** (face mask)
3. **Keep six feet away** from those not in your household
   - Six feet is about the length of an adult-sized bicycle

**Allow 6 feet of space per person**

4. **Cover coughs and sneezes** with your elbow even when you’re outside
5. **Do not use shared equipment** like playgrounds & benches.
6. **If a park or trail is too crowded** to safely practice physical distancing, save that walk or ride for another time, or go to another place.

**If you are feeling sick, PLEASE STAY HOME**
WALK AND BIKE SAFELY

This is a great time to help children learn how to walk and bike safely in your neighborhood. By walking and biking together, you’ll spend quality time together, be more physically active, and teach them important safety skills that will last a lifetime.

Safe Walking

- Choose a route with sidewalks and few street crossings; Try to avoid high traffic streets.
- Keep a 6-foot distance from others and share the sidewalk; Walk in a single file and try to move to the side so that others can pass quickly. Do not walk in the road.
- Don’t walk along the curb; Do not push, shove, or chase each other, Don’t run across the street or walk in the road.
- Look for cars and trucks in intersections as well as coming out of driveways and parking spaces.
  - Look all around for traffic before crossing a street:
    - Look left, right, then left again;
    - Check what might be coming from behind or in front of you.
- Be Safe and Be Seen: wear bright colors and carry a flashlight when it is dark or hard to see.
- Obey traffic signs and signals.
  - If you need to use a walk light, use your elbow to push; use an alcohol-based sanitizer if you do touch the button.

For additional advice, this resource from the National Center for Safe Routes to School provides age appropriate recommendations: Teaching Children to Walk Safely as They Grow and Develop.

Safe Biking

- Be sure to do an ABC Quick Check to make sure your bike is safe and ready for riding.
  - At this time, bike sale and repair shops are considered essential businesses and remain open. Please check here for the most recent updates
- Also do a helmet fit test:
  - Eyes: helmet should fit low on your forehead, 2 finger widths above your eyes. When you look up, you should see your helmet.
  - Ears: When buckled, the straps should meet in a V shape just below the ears.
  - Chin: when buckled, you should be able to fit two fingers between your chin and the straps.
- Helpful tips for parents and caregivers about biking in English and Spanish:
  - Helping Your Child be a Safe Bicyclist
  - Ayudando a su hijo a ser un ciclista seguro
- Boston Bikes tips for safe riding
- Bicycle education videos for various age school children in English and Spanish.

WALKS, TRAILS AND HIKES

Art & History Walks

- Rose Kennedy Greenway: A path that runs through Downtown Boston with many installations of public art and gardens along the way. Take a stroll and admire the beautiful exhibits on display.
- There is history in each neighborhood! See if you can identify special historical spots near you.
Nature Walks/Trails

- **Safe Hikes to Take During the Coronavirus Crisis**: A list of 10 hiking trails in various Boston neighborhoods. Curated by DigBoston.
- **Emerald Necklace**: Parks, greenery, and trails that pass through many parts of Boston from Jamaica Plain to Downtown. It includes Arnold Arboretum, Franklin Park, Jamaica Pond, Olmsted Park, The Riverway, Back Bay Fens, Boston Commons, and Boston Public Garden.
- **Urban Wilds**: Locations throughout the city that preserve Boston’s native wildlife. They are a great refuge from city scenery. If you live near an urban wild, consider planning a walking route to stop by.
- **Boston Parks and Recreation**: This website has information on all Boston parks organized by neighborhood. Boston parks remain open at this time, though city recreational sports areas are closed. Playing group sports or activities is not aloud in city parks.

BIKE TRAILS AND ROUTES

Boston offers a variety of trails for biking. Read the ideas below, or click the “bicycling” option in Google Maps to discover a new bike route near you. It is best to stay in your own neighborhood.

- **Boston Blue Bikes** put together a list of their favorite biking paths around the city. Many of them are great for kids.
  - **Family-friendly Bike Trails**: More Boston area-family friendly bike paths.
- **Charles River Bike Path**: Access this riverfront path via Back Bay neighborhood.
- **Pierre Lallement Bike Path**: Also known as the Southwest Corridor. This path runs through Jamaica Plain, South End, and Back Bay.

THINGS FAMILIES CAN FOCUS ON WHILE OUT WALKING AND BIKING

Other Outdoor Activities

- **MassAudubon Science Walks**: Ideas for outdoor exploration in your neighborhood. Be a local botanist: Look out for the different types of flowers and their colors as you walk through your neighborhood. If it is safe, draw the flower on a sketch pad or write a poem about what you see.
  - **Please note**: All MassAudubon sites are closed until further notice.
- **MassAudubon Nature Bingo Cards**: First one to get BINGO wins!
- Grab some chalk and draw pictures, murals, and more on the sidewalks in your neighborhood.
- Create a scavenger hunt walk using different neighborhood sights. The leader makes a list of locations or objects, and participants take a picture next to each one they find!
  - **Other scavenger hunt walk ideas**.
- **Seek by iNaturalist**: Seek is an app you can use to help learn about the wildlife in your neighborhood and while on walks. No user data is collected so it is safe for kids and families.

Mindful Walking & Daily Routines

Add a walk (or two) to your daily routine with your family. Make it a habit to walk before and/or after school activities for the day. Getting outside and in touch with nature can clear your mind, reduce anxiety, and reset your behavior. For added benefit, try adding a mindfulness practice to your walks with this in-depth guide to mindful walking created by Minneapolis Public Schools.

Be sure to follow the most current guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on keeping yourself, your family, and your community safe from coronavirus. As always, be sure to stay home if you are at all sick.