

Your Health

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Stroller-ready A user's guide to local spots for family exercise

By Ellie Angel

One of the positive outcomes of being quarantined over the past year due to the global pandemic has been spending a copious amount of time with my daughter outdoors.

In a previous Town Crier column, I discussed the health benefits of the outdoors for children and listed activities you can do with them. One of the activities I like to do with my toddler is taking her on stroller-friendly hikes around the Bay Area. There's a learning curve to hiking with little ones, as "be prepared" looks very different for a 2-year-old on the trail.

Following is a guide to local trails that make particularly great places to build your skills as a growing family of travelers – with one bonus adventure a little farther afield. These

Learning Circle

recommendations are particularly stroller-friendly if you're setting out with short legs in your crew.

From experience going out every morning with a toddler, I've learned to bring lots of water, lots of snacks, a garbage bag, towels, extra wipes and a diaper bag with a change of clothes – my daughter gets carsick if we drive more than 20 minutes, so you'll notice I don't include many hikes at the top of twisty roads. All of these items are stored in my car in case I need them at an unexpected moment.

• **Stevens Creek Trail, Mountain View and Sunnyvale.** We love this simple



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ELLIE ANGEL

The Stevens Creek Trail, clockwise from above, McClellan Ranch and Shoreline Park all offer nearby sources of exercise easily done with a stroller crew.

trail. It starts on the border of Sunnyvale/Mountain View and goes all the way up to Shoreline

Park in Mountain View. It's a nice, stroller-friendly walking

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Therapeutic exercise aims to correct injuries, alleviate pain

By Kim Gladfelter

An injury or illness can impair your ability to perform

even the most mundane

daily tasks – getting out of bed, putting on your seatbelt or walking up a flight of stairs. And when even simple tasks become a struggle, you can imagine how challenging it is to keep up with the more demanding activities you love, such as swimming, hiking, arts and crafts, or even just playing with your grandkids in the yard.

One of the best solutions for regaining the pain-free movement you need to do things you enjoy is therapeutic exercise.

What is therapeutic exercise?

Therapeutic exercise refers to a wide range of purposeful movements and activities prescribed by physical therapists and related health-care professionals. The goal of therapeutic exercise is to correct or prevent injury, alleviate pain

Staying Active

and associated symptoms, and improve a person's overall function and sense of well-being.

Depending on the unique needs and goals of the individual, therapeutic exercises may look like:

- Stretches and exercises that target specific joints or muscle groups.
- Compound movements that involve multiple joints and muscle groups, often incorporated into more functional activities such as yoga or Pilates.

Therapeutic exercises are different from a general workout routine you might do at the gym.

For one thing, therapeutic exercises are prescribed to address your specific impairments rather than to simply improve your overall fitness level (though therapeutic exercises can indirectly help with this, too – more on that shortly).

At our clinic, we prescribe therapeutic exercises that can improve pain, tissue healing, balance, flexibility, posture, motor control, strength or endurance –



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Tools like the Gyrotonic Method system help clients go through a full range of motion for any joint, one aspect of therapeutic exercise.

whatever you need.

For another thing, therapeutic exercises are prescribed to match your specific stage of injury. What I mean is that the type

of exercises you need for a two-week-old ankle sprain will be different from the type of exercises you need when you're

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Health Brief

CDC loosens school COVID requirements

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued guidance Friday emphasizing the importance of in-person education. Vaccinated students and teachers can unmask at school,

but the CDC noted, “Based on the needs of the community, school administrators may opt to make mask use universally required,” pointing to the unvaccinated population of kids under age 12.

CDC officials said schools that cannot enact all prevention strategies – such as maintaining a 3-foot distance between students – should reopen anyway, and layer other mitigation efforts.



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Submit Nomination for El Camino Hospital Board Finance Committee

THE EL CAMINO HOSPITAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS is seeking individual(s) interested in serving as a member of its **FINANCE COMMITTEE**. Candidates will have demonstrated strategic financial effectiveness as a Financial Officer or General Manager. Experience with evolving markets and technologies applicable to healthcare, financial services, industry, real estate or other complex financial environments would be highly valued. The El Camino Hospital Board seeks and values diverse and inclusive membership.

Submissions due by **July 23, 2021**.

To learn about additional qualifications, or to nominate someone you know, please email nominations@elcaminohealth.org or visit elcaminohealth.org/board-finance.



elcaminohealth.org



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ELLIE ANGEL

Foothills Park, above, and Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve, below, both accommodate strollers while lifting visitors to a higher elevation after only a short drive.

HIKES

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trail. If you go to the entrance of the Sunnyvale location on Dale Avenue/Heatherstone Way, you can take a walk all the way to downtown Mountain View and grab coffee or a croissant. It is level terrain with some uphill and downhill, but nothing too strenuous.

- **Shoreline Park, Mountain View.** We love going to Shoreline Park; it is one of our local highlights. There is a nice family-friendly walking trail by the water. Fun fact: If you keep walking north, you will hit the Palo Alto Baylands as well. There is a small play structure next to the trail that is a great pitstop for kids to play in the sand and explore. We also love the open fields for a picnic outside in the grassy field, but be careful of the many geese that walk around. There is a cafe next to the Shoreline parking lot, Shoreline Lake American Bistro. It has great coffee, tasty lunch options and open outdoor seating.

- **McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino.** This is a beautiful ranch located next to Blackberry Farm in Cupertino. You can park by the farm entrance and walk on the trail. As you start walking, you'll be welcomed by some adorable animals, including alpacas, goats and horses. Soon after, you'll

come across a lovely park that is suitable for all ages. There are picnic benches nearby to enjoy a snack or lunch. You can keep walking on the trail and see some trees and greenery along the way. It makes for a nice outing.

- **Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve, Cupertino.** This is a lovely county park nestled in the hills. There are two parking areas that lead up to different trails. The one farther from the main entrance leads to a strenuous mountain hike. I have done this hike with a stroller, and it is not easy. You can only get halfway up and then need to turn back, as the terrain is rocky and not exactly stroller-inviting. However, it is great if you want a challenge. The other parking lot leads to the entrance to a level trail that is much more doable. Deer Hollow Farm is a highlight on this path, so stop and see some animals along the way.

- **Foothills Park, Palo Alto.** This is one of our favorite spots to visit locally. The park used to be restricted to Palo Alto residents only; however, since December, it has been open to all. It is located in the foothills along a windy road. There is a beautiful lake you can park next to and walk around, or have a picnic in the grass right by the creek and watch the ducks nearby. There is also a trail downhill of the park that is



peaceful and stroller-friendly. It tends to get very crowded on weekends, so I'd recommend visiting early or in the afternoon to avoid crowds.

- **Pfeiffer Falls Trail, Big Sur.** If you are feeling adventurous and want to embark on a longer road trip, Big Sur is an excellent option. After 13 years and a \$1 million renovation in the wake of a wildfire, the famous Pfeiffer Falls Trail recently reopened to the public. The trail is family-friendly; if you go, you will be surrounded by pristine redwood trees and will also see a 60-foot waterfall.

Ellie Angel is a local mom and educator. For more ideas for local young families, follow her on Instagram and find her on Medium at @mama4learning.