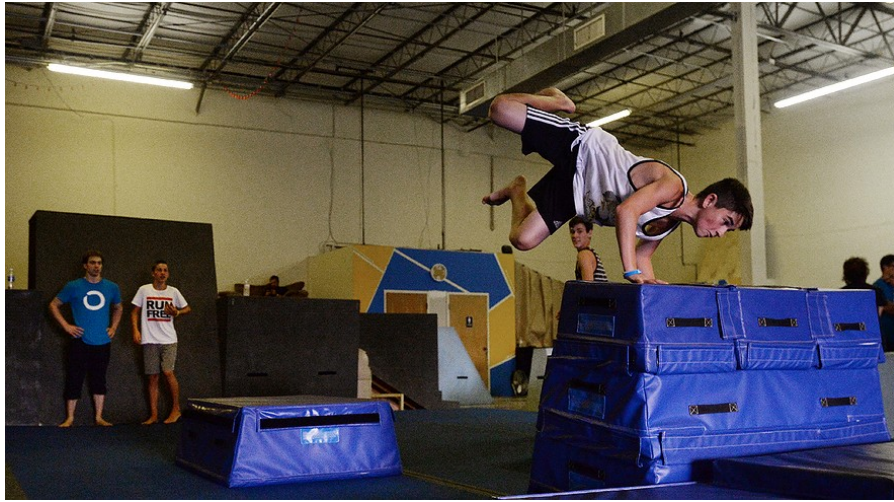


## French Kids Introduce Parkour to Global Community

By The Raleigh News and Observer, adapted by Newsela staff. 11.23.14



Cru Mahoney, 13, goes through a parkour workout in Raleigh, North Carolina, Aug. 7, 2014. Parkour is a training discipline using movement that developed from military obstacle courses. Practitioners aim to get from A to B in the most efficient way possible. Photo: Chuck Liddy/Raleigh News & Observer/TNS

RALEIGH, N.C. — These young people could be called nerds: they are into video games, comics, superheroes. They're not stuck in front of a screen, though. These nerds fly through the city like their favorite superheroes.

They bounce off walls, jump over fences, hop off roofs. They practice parkour, an activity that involves running through the city as quickly as possible, athletically avoiding obstacles. People who practice parkour are called "traceurs."

"Parkour is essentially training yourself to move more efficiently from Point A to Point B effectively, safely and with speed," says 23-year-old Nick Faircloth of Raleigh, who discovered parkour when he was 16. "It's about training hard to enjoy the freedom of play."

### Main Idea 1:

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## French Kids Spread The Sport

No one is sure exactly where parkour came from — its origins are murky. It seems to have started in Vietnam in the 1950s, as training for the French military. In the 1990s, a group of French teens brought parkour back, and adapted it for city life.

Soon, the Paris suburbs were filled with young people bouncing around public plazas, moving around the city with grace and agility not typically seen on the streets.

At first, the sport stayed mainly local. Then, smartphone cameras and YouTube allowed the sport to go global. Now there is a worldwide community of traceurs.

The community tends to be young and geeky, traceurs say. “It’s the sport of nerds,” says Don Sportsman, whose 10-year-old son Cheland loves parkour.

Cheland started attending parkour classes at Enso Movement in Raleigh when the gym opened in April. He goes to classes about twice a week, but “he’d go every day if he could,” his dad says.

Parkour isn’t Cheland’s only quirky hobby — he is also into ventriloquism. He first got interested in puppetry, then dummies, then started working on his ventriloquist skills.

### Main Idea 2:

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## Wide Range Of Students Scaling Stuff

On a recent Tuesday evening, parkour instructor Alan Tran led a class of 10- to 16-year-olds in a training session that lasted an hour and 15 minutes, beginning with 20 minutes of warm-up.

Tran guided the traceurs through and over plywood platforms, walls and other obstacles in the gym, stressing the importance of technique and safety.

“Let’s work on nice and quiet jumps,” he advised, reminding his pupils that landing flat-footed is loud and potentially painful.

Enso Movement offers some instruction during the day, but most classes are in the evening, each with five to 13 students. Most are middle school to college age; one of the adult classes has a student who is in his late 30s or early 40s. In France, classes for older people are common.

### **Main Idea 3:**

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### **Suddenly, He Was Hooked**

Faircloth, who is an owner of the Enso gym, said he was not an active person when he stumbled onto parkour.

“I was sedentary, didn’t do a whole lot,” he recalls.

One day he found himself in the woods behind a relative’s house. He began to jump and climb through obstacles he found among the boulders and fallen trees.

Shortly after, he was surfing the Internet when he discovered French kids doing the same moves in an urban environment — the city. For him, the moves were as close to being a superhero as a mortal could come — he was hooked.

Faircloth’s discovery of parkour came at the same time the sport was beginning to spread in North Carolina. Strong parkour communities developed at North Carolina State University and at UNC-Charlotte. Soon there were two statewide parkour jam where traceurs could gather.

### **Main Idea 4:**

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### **New Ways Around The City**

Practicing parkour in the gym is like daily practice for team sports: getting better so you can enjoy the activity more. For traceurs, it’s usually the weekends when they are able to get out into the city, putting their new skills to use, running, jumping, hopping and bouncing through the city.

Faircloth says it’s no surprise that young people want to do parkour.

“Kids want to be active,” he says. “It’s not that kids don’t want to play, it’s just that sometimes they don’t have options. If you’re not into team sports, your options are limited.”

Parkour is how kids have been playing for thousands of years, he says, only now, they have training.

**Main Idea 5:**

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**Parkour Primer**

There is parkour, and there are other similar sports. The differences:

Parkour — As Faircloth notes, parkour is about moving efficiently from Point A to Point B in a safe and speedy manner. That means going over obstacles — fences, walls, benches — whenever safely possible.

Freerunning — Described by Enso Movement as an "expressive" performance "with roots in parkour and branches in gymnastics, martial arts, dance and more." It's similar to parkour, though the goal isn't necessarily to get from A to B in as straight a line as possible.

Tricking — Unlike parkour, tricking doesn't deal with obstacles. According to Faircloth, it is more about "complex acrobatic moves, kicking, spins, turns," break-dancing and similar moves.

**Main Idea 6:**

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Now that you have tracked each main idea, determine the central idea of the text. Remember, a central idea statement clearly identifies the WHO (TOPIC) + WHAT (WHAT ABOUT THE TOPIC WAS DISCUSSED) + WHY (WHY READERS SHOULD CARE/THEME).

CENTRAL IDEA:

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## Quiz

1. Select the paragraph in the section “French Kids Spread The Sport” that describes how it became so popular.

2. Which of the sentences from the section “Wide Range Of Students Scaling Stuff” suggests there is more to parkour than just exercise?

(a) Most are middle school to college age; one of the adult classes has a student who is in his late 30s or early 40s.

(b) Enso Movement offers some instruction during the day, but most classes are in the evening, each with five to 13 students.

(c) On a recent Tuesday evening, parkour instructor Alan Tran led a class of 10- to 16-year olds in a training session that lasted an hour and 15 minutes, beginning with 20 minutes of warm-up.

(d) Tran guided the traceurs through and over plywood platforms, walls and other obstacles in the gym, stressing the importance of technique and safety.

3. Read the sentence from the article.

According to Faircloth, it is more about “complex acrobatic moves, kicking, spins, turns,” break-dancing and similar moves.

Which definition of the word “complex” applies BEST to the sentence?

(a) a mathematical number made of real and imaginary parts

(b) a group of buildings on a single site

(c) made of many different and connecting parts

(d) a related group of important emotional ideas or feelings

4. Read the sentence from the article.

“It’s not that kids don’t want to play, it’s just that sometimes they don’t have options.”

Which of the sentences below BEST captures the meaning of the sentence above?

- (a) Kids often do not have much choice in which types of physical activity they get.
- (b) Kids often do not get enough physical activity because they do not have enough choices.
- (c) Kids need more options for play than just physical activity.
- (d) Kids like playing all kinds of different games, not just ones that involve physical activity