
Back from break, spring fever sets in

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Though the warm Dallas weather acts as a friendly welcome to the Hilltop for SMU students coming back from spring break vacations, it also makes it hard to get focused and back to their studies.

The mindset of spring break often causes students to struggle through the last weeks of classes.

But with a little over a month until finals, students still have work to do before the semester is over, and the beautiful weather provides students with many workout options that will help them get focused and succeed in school.

According to John Ratey of the Harvard Medical School, fitness-based exercise makes the human brain more ready to learn.

This could be exactly what students need to get back studying and thrive through finals.

Dallas has many parks and outdoor places for students to get a good workout and enjoy the warm spring weather.

The Katy Trail is one of the most popular places in Dallas to run, walk, rollerblade or bike for students.

The Katy Trail runs through Uptown and Oak Lawn and follows the old path of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad.

The trail begins close to the SMU campus just near the end of Hillcrest Avenue and runs about three and a half miles to Victory Park and the American Airlines Center.



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White Rock Lake is celebrating 100 years and is still a popular location for Dallasites to get outdoor exercise.

"I live really close to the Katy Trail and it is perfect to run on when the weather is nice," said Nicolle Keogh, a senior at SMU. "I take my dog, too. There are always people with dogs on it, which is fun."

Friends of the Katy Trail, a nonprofit group that recruits members and donors to aid in the upkeep of the trail, also puts on events.

According to the friends of the Katy Trail website, "Although it is a city park, the Katy Trail is maintained and improved with membership contributions. The Katy Trail is what it is today because of people who contribute. Be one of those people be a Friend of the Katy Trail."

Coming up on May 12, the Katy Trail will host the Michelob Ultra Katy 5K. Runners or walkers can participate in several different races and competitions.

"The Friends organization has approximately 1,200 due-paying members who host a range of events to raise awareness and funds for the Trail, the largest of which is the annual Katy 5K Run held the third Thursday in May. Membership contributions help keep the Katy Trail clean, safe and beautiful," The Friends of the Katy Trail website said.

Another place for students to enjoy the sun and get a workout is White Rock Lake.

White Rock Lake is a man-made reservoir that covers 1,254 acres, celebrating its 100 year anniversary.

Only about 10 minutes away from the SMU campus, it has a hike and bike trail that is also a great place to jog, walk, or ride bikes.

"For the Love of the Lake," is "an enthusiastic, energetic group of volunteers dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of White Rock Lake Park as an urban oasis," according to their website.

For those who are looking for a longer workout, maybe on a weekend, White Rock Lake's trail is just over nine miles long and even hosts an annual marathon.

For those wanting to stay in the neighborhood, both University Park and Highland Park have parks and outdoor areas to exercise.

At the corner of Lovers Lane and Dickens Avenue is Curtis Park, which has a running trail, outdoor pool and outdoor tennis courts.

Tennis is another outdoor activity that students can enjoy with the warm weather and get some exercise.

Another park where students can workout at sits in the middle of Highland Park, next to the Highland Park Presbyterian Church.

This park has soccer fields and a path to walk or jog around and is close to campus for those not wanting to venture very far.

For students wanting to stay on campus, the outdoor track, pool, or stadium are great places to get a workout outdoors.

For runners the track is a good place to get some cardio exercise while being able to watch other things going on, like lacrosse practice, or to simply enjoy working out outdoors.

Running the stadium stairs can also be a great cardio workout and strengthen, as well.

If it gets too hot or students are looking for cross training, swimming is a great exercise and that a high calorie-burning workout.

According to Gina Garcia, the assistant director of fitness at SMU, "if you do a good cardio workout at least three times a week for 30 minutes to one hour at a time for a month, you will feel much better overall. This includes your mood, energy levels, and health."