Trail running can elevate your daily workout, engaging your mind and body in new ways. Here are a few tips for a successful introduction to trail running.

1. ADJUST EXPECTATIONS.
As you transition from paved-surface running, be open-minded about your expectations. Running on uneven, natural trails will impact how far and how fast you can move. Don’t be discouraged if you’re putting in fewer miles or slowing your pace.

2. KEEP YOUR EYES AND FEET UP.
The varying terrain keeps trail running interesting. Running the same course throughout the year can provide a new challenge each season. Remember to pick your feet up on the trail to clear rocks, roots and branches that cross your path. An active gaze will help you strategize an approach to these obstacles and keep you on your feet.

3. GET THE RIGHT GEAR.
Depending on the trails you choose, a new pair of running kicks might be in order. Protect your body by getting the appropriate footwear.
Twenty miles of spectacular trails winding along forests, fields, streams, and ponds.

4949 Tealtown Road, Milford, OH 45150

The Tri-State area has some beautiful places just a short drive away. I hear people talking about Hocking Hills here in Ohio often and Red River Gorge down in Kentucky all the time. Somewhere I never hear anyone talking about is the Hoosier National Forest out in Indiana. Stay with me here …

I wouldn’t have guessed there was anything too terribly exciting hiding in Indiana, but the Hoosier NF provides 203,000 acres open to recreation, with 266 miles of trail to explore. It’s also home to Indiana’s only wilderness area, the Charles C. Deam Wilderness. The latter encompasses 12,000 acres with 57 miles of trails and many more miles of unofficial trails leading to hidden ruins and hundred-year-old cemeteries left over from when the area was inhabited by farmers before the Great Depression. The area is also home to Lake Monroe, the largest lake entirely in Indiana.

One of my favorite things to do is to get up early on a Saturday and head west to the Axsom Branch Trailhead. From there it’s a moderate 4-mile hike out to the shore of Lake Monroe, where you can sit and enjoy the day along the water, swimming and watching fishers and other boats go by. As the sun starts to set on the other side of the water, you can begin the hike back to the car. Or if you’re a backpacker, you can set up camp near the lake shore and enjoy a night under the stars.

Trust me when I say this: Hoosier NF holds way more awesome hiking on top of this, so if you get a chance, definitely check it out. Hope to see you on the trail!

Ben Shaw works in the Cincinnati Area as a mechanical engineer. He plans to hike the Pacific Crest Trail in the summer of 2021 and has plans for different journeys around the country in 2020. You might run into him on the trails in Red River Gorge or paddling down the Little Miami.

By Ben Shaw
WEIGHTED HIKING ADVENTURES

Take a quick sojourn out of the city to enjoy these favorite weekend hikes in our region.

EDGE OF APPALACHIA PRESERVE SYSTEM

Discover one of the most biodiverse greenspaces in our region! A short drive 75 miles east of Cincinnati sits 20,000 acres of hardwood forest and prairie across a collection of nature preserves, known as the Edge of Appalachia. Of the 11 preserves in the system, four have been recognized as National Natural Landmarks. Explore one of these trails at the Edge. (maps available at www.cincymuseum.org/nature)

Charles A. Eulett Wilderness Preserve Trail: Trek through the richest collection of plant species at Edge of Appalachia on this 2.5-mile loop.

Christian and Emma Goetz Buzzardroost Rock Preserve: Take in the incredible views of the Ohio Brush Creek valley from the cliffs of the Buzzardroost Rock Preserve. There are 4.4 miles of trails to explore here.

E. Lucy Braun Lynx Prairie Preserve: The place where the Edge of Appalachia got its start, this prairie is home to rare, native plant species. Hike through wooded trails to prairie openings on this short 1.4-mile path.

Joan Jones Portman Trail: This 1.6-mile trailhead is located near a canoe/kayak access to the Ohio Brush Creek. Consider taking a paddle after your hike to the lookout on the Joan Jones Portman Trail and take in the view.

CINCINNATI NATURE CENTER

Venture to Clermont County, Ohio and you’ll find a place like no other. At the Cincinnati Nature Center you can step into tranquil forests and wander winding trails across running streams on 1,700 acres of beautifully maintained greenspace. The Cincinnati Nature Center charges a daily admissions fee. If you want to regularly enjoy the Nature Center, consider purchasing a membership to save money and broaden your access to “members only” venues.

www.cincynature.org

Rowe Woods: Exploration is almost endless on the over 1,000 acres at Rowe Woods. Find the trail that best fits your adventure -- there are 14 to choose from, ranging from easy to difficult. In the springtime, walk the Wildflower Trail to see some of the best wildflower blooms in the region. Workout your legs on the 200+ stair steps on the Geology Trail or meander around Powel Crosley Lake on the Edge Trail. Rowe Woods is
the perfect destination for family hikes, walks with the dog or just some peaceful time alone.

**Nature PlayScape:** Let the little ones romp around at this playscape designed to encourage unstructured play and curiosity. Located in Rowe Woods, Nature PlayScape is full of big boulders, logs, plants, soil and water waiting to be discovered by young explorers. This is a must-see attraction for kids while visiting Cincinnati Nature Center.

**Longbranch Farm & Trails:** Open only to members, Longbranch Farm & Trails offers 767 acres of forest and farmland in Goshen, just nine miles from Milford. Trek through the five miles of easy and moderate trails at this exclusive spot.

**Daniel Boone National Forest**

Greater Cincinnatians flock to this region approximately two hours south of Cincinnati, and for good reason: Its arches and cliffs are a jaw-dropping backdrop for a day (or more) of hiking. Be sure to exercise caution and stay on the trails -- while the cliffs are gorgeous, they can quickly become dangerous when visitors ignore safety protocols (and good sense).

**Red River Gorge:** A large network of trails crisscrosses this geological area, allowing hikers to traverse ridgelines or descend to peaceful creeks far below the cliffs. Take several short (.25 miles each way) walks to some of the park’s arches, or tackle some of the park’s longer treks. The two-mile (one way) Auxier Ridge Trail is particularly scenic; combine it with other nearby trails to create a loop. [https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/dbnf/recarea/?recid=39458](https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/dbnf/recarea/?recid=39458)

**Natural Bridge State Resort Park:** Located adjacent to Red River Gorge, this Kentucky state park boasts a 78-foot long, 65-foot high arch. After hiking (or taking the sky lift) up to enjoy the view this natural bridge affords, you can hit the park’s 10 trails, which range in length from .5 to 7.5 miles. The park also features a swimming pool; mini-golf; canoeing; kayaking and pedal boating. For those who wish to make a weekend of it, a lodge, cabins and campsites are available. [https://parks.ky.gov/slade/parks/resort/natural-bridge-state-resort-park](https://parks.ky.gov/slade/parks/resort/natural-bridge-state-resort-park)
Looking for a new outdoor adventure? Just sixteen miles from Cincinnati, at the mouth of the Great Miami River near Lawrenceburg, IN is Oxbow, Inc., a Land Trust protecting the Great Miami River floodplain. 3000 acres of floodplain draw more than 290 species of birds, 470 species of vascular plants as well as mammals, fish, amphibians, and mussels. 1400 acres of unique floodplain habitat are available to explore. Bird watching, botanizing, photography, kayaking and canoeing, bicycling (gravel and dirt roads) hiking and nature walks are a few available Oxbow activities. This important migratory bird area is open to the public. Go to www.oxbowinc.org to see maps, directions, sightings and upcoming programs and guided nature walks or oxbowinc on Facebook.

Get ready to engage your mind and body in “the thinking sport” of orienteering. The goal is to navigate through a series of checkpoints using a map and compass to determine the most efficient route. You can learn the basics of orienteering in about half an hour, but the sport offers a lifetime of practice and challenge. Great for all ages, orienteering is an ideal family activity. Give your kids a chance to explore the outdoors and burn off some energy while teaching them how to orient a map and set a compass. Think you’ve got the hang of it? Check out local orienteering events and test your speed and accuracy against other competitors. Perfect for every season, orienteering is definitely worth trying out! To get started orienteering, we suggest connecting with Orienteering Cincinnati at www.ocin.org.

Photo by Meg Poehlmann
Looking for a new outdoor adventure? Just sixteen miles from Cincinnati, at the mouth of the Great Miami River near Lawrenceburg, IN is Oxbow, Inc., a Land Trust protecting the Great Miami River floodplain. 3000 acres of floodplain draw more than 290 species of birds, 470 species of vascular plants as well as mammals, fish, amphibians, and mussels. 1400 acres of unique floodplain habitat are available to explore. Bird watching, botanizing, photography, kayaking and canoeing, bicycling (gravel and dirt roads) hiking and nature walks are a few available Oxbow activities. This important migratory bird area is open to the public. Go to www.oxbowinc.org to see maps, directions, signings and upcoming programs and guided nature walks or oxbowinc on Facebook. (photo by Meg Poehlmann)

VALLEY VIEW FOUNDATION
790 Garfield Ave. | Milford, OH 45150
www.valleyviewcampus.org

Valley View is a favorite destination of Adventure Crew for our “scavenger hike” adventures. We love exploring the wetlands, woodlands and prairie that make Valley View special. The foundation’s plant rescue program produces thousands of pounds of fresh produce each year, which is transformed into healthy meals for hungry families. Did you know they even grow hops? There’s lots to explore at Valley View!
HIKING

URBAN TREKS

THE COFFEE RUN
Next time you’re craving a hot cup of joe before your weekend walk, consider this route.

START: Roebling Point Books & Coffee, 306 Greenup St., Covington
ROUTE: Across the Roebling Bridge to Smale Riverfront Park
ATTRACTIONS TO EXPLORE: On your crossing, check out the historic bridge and beautiful views of the Ohio River. In the park, there's lots to discover. Relax on the swings, stroll through the rose gardens or check out the carousel. This is a great park for kids!

TREK THROUGH SPACE
Take your urban hike far out when you explore the SPACE WALK, a to-scale model of the solar system.

START: Salway Park, Spring Grove Ave. in Northside
ROUTE: Mill Creek Greenway Trail
ATTRACTIONS TO EXPLORE: Traverse the solar system in less than a mile on this 3.5 billion:1 scale model along the Mill Creek Greenway Trail. Fruit trees have been planted along the trail, creating an edible forest garden.
ART IN THE PARK
Creative and natural beauty are nestled together in this indoor/outdoor adventure.

START: Art Museum, 953 Eden Park Drive
ROUTE: Explore Eden Park
ATTRACTIONS TO EXPLORE: Begin your adventure by discovering the exhibits at the Cincinnati Art Museum, located within Eden Park. Pack a lunch to enjoy afterwards while you sit next to Mirror Lake. Don’t leave without taking in the gorgeous river views.

BOOK IT
Bookworm meets earthworm on this urban trek in Clifton.

START: Clifton Branch Library, 3400 Brookline Ave.
ROUTE: Cross Ludlow Avenue to Burnet Woods
ATTRACTIONS TO EXPLORE: Check out a page-turner and then crack it open while you enjoy an urban oasis. In between chapters, stretch your legs on the trails. Listen closely for the healthy population of birds that reside in Burnet Woods.

A PEACEFUL STROLL
Take in the historic beauty of the third-largest cemetery in the nation.

START: Spring Grove Cemetery, 4521 Spring Grove Ave.
ROUTE: Paths throughout the cemetery
ATTRACTIONS TO EXPLORE: Spring Grove Cemetery is the resting place for many well-known Cincinnati entrepreneurs, politicians and community leaders. The 40 miles of winding roads bring you past preserved woodlands and serene lakes.
HIKING IN THE RAIN
GEAR UP, STAY DRY, KEEP TREKKING

Don’t let the gray scare you away. Here are some important gear considerations for rainy day hikes.

Photo by: Roads Rivers and Trails
ON YOUR BODY

WARM BASE LAYERS: Cotton is rotten! Cotton clothes will hold in moisture and chill you to the bone. Stick to synthetic or wool base layers to keep you warm. Similarly, avoid down insulated layers. Down loses its insulating ability when wet. (A)

RAIN JACKET: A high quality rain jacket is your first defense. (B)

WATERPROOF PANTS: A pair with a zipper at the ankle makes it easy to take this layer off and on without removing your boots. (C)

WATERPROOF BOOTS AND GAITERS: Keep your feet warm and dry with solid waterproof boots. Gaiters will protect the top of your footwear and your socks on especially soggy days. Select a boot with good traction, too -- trails will be muddy and slippery. (D)

ON YOUR BACK

PACK RAIN COVER: Keep the contents of your pack dry with a pack rain cover. Some day packs come with a cover built in. Otherwise, you can buy one separately. (E)

EXTRA DRY SOCKS: In the off chance your feet get soaked, these will be a lifesaver. Other dry layers are recommended, too. (F)

DRY BAGS: Don’t let your extra clothes get soggy -- pack items in dry bags. Even a thick ziplock bag can suffice. (G)

IN YOUR HANDS

TREKKING POLES: Slick surfaces invite injury. Use a handy set of trekking poles to increase balance and reduce slips and falls. (H)

WATERPROOF GLOVES: On colder days, gloves will help keep you warm and your grip reliable when using your trekking poles. (I)

( NOT ) IN YOUR MIND

DESTINATION DETERMINATION: Be mindful of the weather and your fatigue. Don’t let a mentality of “finish the hike” risk your health and safety in inclement weather, especially if hypothermia is possible. Be OK with turning around early and warming up with a hot chocolate, coffee or tea while you reminisce about your rainy day adventure.
Find Your Way

Ohio's only National Water Trail

www.GreatMiamiRiverway.com
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Here, the hard edges of city life meet the grit of the outdoors. We believe adventure is riding a bike for the first time, or feeling mud shift under your boots, or falling over your skis. Nowhere else can you find this precise mixture of adrenaline and peace.

Through ADVENTURE CREW,
city teens develop the COURAGEOUS SPIRIT
to step out of their COMFORT ZONE
and discover new worlds -- OUTSIDE in nature,
and INSIDE themselves.
This deep connection to nature will CHANGE THE COURSE
of their lives -- no matter what ENVIRONMENT they’re in.
Adventure Crew is a 501(c)3 that regularly connects a roster of almost 1,000 city teens across 24 schools to the great outdoors. Adventures are offered monthly and at no cost to students. Through Adventure Crew, city youth are immersed in the physical, mental, and social benefits of time spent in nature.

CONNECT WITH THE CREW ONLINE
W: adventurecrew.org
FB: @AdventureCrewCincinnati
IG: @AdventureCrewCincy

"WHEN I’M OUT IN NATURE WITH ADVENTURE CREW I FEEL FREE AND AT PEACE."