



# Green for fitness

It's time to escape from stuffy gyms. **Bella Blissett** looks at exercises in the city that are a breath of fresh air

**A**S THE weather improves and mornings lighten up, Londoners are beginning to take their fitness regimes outside.

Already parks are packed with runners but there are other ways to feel the burn in the great outdoors, and numerous benefits to be gained. Fresh air and daylight will boost your mood, save money otherwise spent on gym memberships and even improve your fitness levels more rapidly than most inside work.

By exercising outside, you'll automatically burn more calories as your body tries to keep itself warm in the colder air. And by eliminating the forward motion of the treadmill, you have to work harder overall. Here's our guide to five great ways to exercise outside in London.

## OUTDOOR EXTREME

Commit to a six-week outdoor fitness bootcamp that holds classes through all seasons, whatever the weather. The one-hour classes are limited to five to 10 people and are tailored to participants' fitness goals. They include the use of kettlebells — which burn more calories than any other kind of fitness equipment.

The ultra-keen can attend up to five sessions per week and still get a varied exercise programme at each class.

● £70 for one session a week for six weeks, £260 for five sessions a week for six weeks; (020 7731 313,

[www.outdoor-extreme.com](http://www.outdoor-extreme.com)).

## FREE-RUNNING

Inspired by the French sport of Parkour, a class in Free-running will have you sprinting, jumping and hanging from all elements of the urban landscape. You won't be scaling tower blocks in your first session but leaping over concrete barriers and up subway steps will raise your heart rate, provide a good work-out and improve your agility.

● Visit [www.urbanfreeflow.com](http://www.urbanfreeflow.com) for class details.

## TREE-ATHLON

Do a 5km sponsored run followed by a group tree-planting session

in this year's Tree-Athlon event. Organised by eco-conscious charity, Trees for Cities that helps to re-landscape urban areas, entering the event will get you fitter and the city greener.

● Being held on 20 September in Battersea Park; visit [www.tree-athlon.org](http://www.tree-athlon.org) to register for the event.

## BRITISH MILITARY FITNESS

Let a member of the armed forces put you through your paces in one

of London's parks. Classes are divided into ability levels from novice to advanced and all include an hour of drills, circuits and military-style exercises followed by a cool-down and stretching session. You'll combine a cardiovascular work-out with strength training and because every session is different, you

won't get bored. Those who find it hard to commit to a course can attend on a drop-in basis.

● The first trial session is free;

visit [www.britmilfit.com](http://www.britmilfit.com) for pricing and class locations.

## TENNIS

While it's still not officially the tennis season, now is a great time to play the sport. The weather's warmer and brighter and the courts are still relatively empty. A woman weighing 9st can burn up to 400 calories per hour during a game of tennis while also improving her hand-eye co-ordination, agility, flexibility and strength — and her aerobic fitness.

● The London School of Tennis, ([www.lstennis.co.uk](http://www.lstennis.co.uk)) runs six-week adult courses from £48 or visit [www.londontennis.co.uk](http://www.londontennis.co.uk) for court locations.



Rex Features

**Sitting up in the park:** as the weather gradually warms up, there are many advantages to exercising outside