

Storr's Hill Girl Scout Gold Project



Summer and Winter



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Section I: Why The Firepit Was Built

You are reading this paper because it was a part of my Girl Scout Gold Project. The focus of my project was to provide kids, and members of the community, a reason to hike and get away from technology, which so often consumes our everyday lives. I accomplished this by collaborating with Storr's Hill to build a firepit at the top of the hill. It created a reason for kids and others to take a hike, especially those who live in condos, multi family units, and those without back yards, a reason to be outside. It also created an outdoor meeting space that kids in the entire community could use. "Teens spend an average of 8½ hours on screens per day, and tweens – that's ages 8 to 12 – are not far behind, at 5 1/2 hours daily." (*Rosenburg and Szura*). This is impacting teens and kids' health and by being outside and hiking, this helps to overcome the negative impacts of technology on teens and kids.

Section II: Health Benefits


Keeping your body healthy is key. The health benefits of going for a hike are endless. In this paper, three specific healthy impacts of hiking will be discussed: Improved Cardiovascular Health, Stronger Bones and Better Bone Density, and Release of Endorphins and Dopamine:

A. Cardiovascular System Pumping Blood To The Heart.

It's first crucial to know what the cardiovascular system is and its function, "The cardiovascular system consists of the heart, blood vessels, and blood. Its primary function is to transport nutrients and oxygen-rich blood to all parts of the body and to carry deoxygenated blood back to the lungs." (*Sherrell*). Hiking, a form of exercise, works the cardiovascular system, "The Centers for Disease Control showed that by exercising, individuals significantly reduce their chances for heart problems, while those who do not exercise are twice as likely to have coronary heart disease." (*Health Benefits of Hiking*). Not only is risk for coronary heart disease lowered, but blood pressure can also be lowered. "Physical activity such as hiking lowers blood pressure 4-10 points and regaining a normal body weight can lower it 5-20 points." (*Health Benefits of Hiking*).

It is important to know how to take your pulse. Click on the video links below to learn how to take your pulse:

 [What Is A Healthy Heart Rate - What Affects Heart Rate - What Is Maximum Heart...](#)

 [PE Chef: Pulse- How to Measure your Heart Rate \(video lesson with worksheet\)](#)

B. Stronger Bones And Better Bone Density With Exposure To Vitamin D

"Vitamin D is a nutrient your body needs for building and maintaining healthy bones. That's because your body can only absorb calcium, the primary component of bone, when vitamin D is present. " (Mayo Clinic). Your body also makes vitamin D when "direct sunlight converts a chemical in your skin into an active form of the vitamin (calciferol)." (Mayo Clinic). "Bone density, a measure of the mineral content in bones, is crucial for skeletal health and reducing the risk of fractures. As we age, bone density naturally

declines, making it important to find ways to maintain or increase it. Hiking, a popular outdoor activity, has been suggested as a potential bone-building exercise.” (Steven).

C. Release of Endorphins and Dopamine

Endorphins and Dopamine will help you feel better and reduce your stress. Both Dopamine and Endorphins are neurotransmitters in the brain, “Dopamine is a type of monoamine neurotransmitter. It’s made in your brain and acts as a chemical messenger, communicating messages between nerve cells in your brain and the rest of your body.” (Cleveland Clinic). “Dopamine is known as the “feel-good” hormone. It gives you a sense of pleasure. It also gives you the motivation to do something when you’re feeling pleasure.” (Cleveland Clinic).

“Endorphins are chemicals (hormones) your body releases when it feels pain or stress. They’re released during pleasurable activities such as exercise” (Cleveland Clinic).


According to (“Why Hiking Is Uniquely Beneficial for Your Body and Your Brain”), “hiking for only 30 minutes has been shown to reduce stress hormones by as much as 28 percent.”

Section III: Hiking, Safety Strategies, and Fun Ideas

If hiking with small children, strategies can include:

- Taking breaks, “Plan on taking a lot of breaks while hiking with kids. Curious by nature, hiking kids will always want to stop and explore”. (Brewer).

- Have fun hiking games ready to play with your kids, “playing tag or hide and seek are good hiking games for kids...also play games like I Spy and guessing animals or colors” (Brewer).
- Knowing your child’s meltdown point, “Some days, your kids are going to do really well and other days not so much” (“8 Tips for the Perfect Hike with Kids”).
- Alphabet Hike
- Color Hunt
- Safety Concerns: When possible, hike with a friend, bring a cellphone, stay clear of wild animals, if you bring a map follow it and stay on the trail.
- Click on the link below for fun hiking ideas with kids.

 [How To Make Kids Like Hiking | Nature Kids Activities & Tips to Make Hiking Fun |...](#)

Section IV: What To Pack

Having a physical or mental checklist before you leave to go hiking is a good idea. Things to include may be; a visor/hat, snacks, water, a hiking stick, poison ivy/bug repellent stick, sunscreen, and medications. You can never be too prepared, “Even when hiking on shorter treks or less challenging trails, make sure you're carrying a first-aid kit or first-aid supplies”. (Kehoe). “The American Hiking Society recommends bringing between half a quart and a quart of water per hour of hiking, depending on the intensity of the hike and how hot it is.” (Trimble). Looking at the weather forecast in advance will help in choosing the right clothing. For example, on a rainy day you may choose a raincoat. Dressing in layers is a great way to go irregardless of the season.

"Don't neglect wearing proper hiking shoes with good grip" (Trimble). Sandals are not an optimal choice.

Click on the link below to get an in-depth checklist of what you should pack for a short hike:

[Hiking Essentials Checklist: What to Bring on a Hike | REI Expert Advice](#) (Kehoe).

Section V: Potential Uses of Firepit

If you're looking for an outdoor meeting space, here are some suggestions for activities:

- Girl Scout / Boy Scout Meeting
- Birthday Party
- Night Hike / StarGazing
- School Field Trip
- After School Social Gatherings
- Family Bonding Time
- Team Workshops
- Drum Circle
- Holiday Parties
- Club Meetings
- Meditation Circles

In conclusion, now that you know the health benefits, hiking and safety strategies, what to pack, and potential uses of the firepit, take a break and go for a hike.

Contact Lebanon Outing Club for details/reservations.

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Section VI: Works Cited in MLA

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