

# Free/low cost **Exercise and Fitness Resources**

(Updated 3/3/14 please send corrections/suggestions to [tmorris@sfaf.org](mailto:tmorris@sfaf.org) available at [www.tspssf.com](http://www.tspssf.com))

## Monday

**YOGA:** Laughing Lotus Yoga Center- 3271 16<sup>th</sup> St (@ Dolores), 415-355-1600 Vinyasa Yoga, Mon- Fri, 2:30- 3:45 PM, \$1.00 - \$5.00 by donation. [www.laughinglotus.com](http://www.laughinglotus.com)

**YOGA:** The Women's Building- 3543 18<sup>th</sup> St (bet Valencia & Octavia), 415-431-1180 Vinyasa Yoga, Mon & Wed 6:00- 7:15 PM, \$5.00 by donation.

**YOGA:** Faithful Fools: Yoga - Led by Marria Evbuoma Mondays 11:00am-12:00 pm Faithful Fools events:. 234 Hyde

**YOGA:** The St. Vincent De Paul Wellness Center 1175 Howard Street Mondays 2:00-3:00 Yoga

### **SF GENERAL HOSPITAL HAS A KICK ASS Community Wellness Center**

SF General Hospital and Trauma Center 1001 Potrero Ave. Suite 2D35 (2nd floor, across from Cafeteria) Visit us at [www.sfghwellness.org](http://www.sfghwellness.org) for more wellness on our Community Calendar. (415) 206-4955 SF General's Community Wellness Program works to promote and encourage wellness practices for patients, staff, and all San Franciscans. We support a holistic view of health in which physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual health are considered interconnected and essential in achieving improved health and wellness. Wellness classes are designed to accommodate patients and staff at all levels of physical abilities and/or limitations. Most of our wellness class instructors are bilingual (English/Spanish), and one is bilingual (English/Cantonese) **All Classes are FREE FREE FREE**  
Mondays 12:00 PM Strength Training  
Mondays 5:00 PM Zumba (Bilingual Spanish)

**TAI CHI 4 FREE** Every Monday & Wednesday 10AM-11AM Glide Foundation Taylor and Ellis 5th Floor Finding ones true center energy can be useful in so many ways.It can be integrated into thought processes, balance, and discovering new ways to live the yin and the yang .Taught by a man who had severe back problems for over 20 years of his life is proof that it works!It is (for now) a very intimate group and would be perfect for anyone to at least try it out!

### **SENIOR FITNESS Always Active Castro Street Senior Center**

Mondays and Thursdays from 10:30-11:30am and Tuesdays from 10-11:00am

Where: Castro Street Senior Center What: Stay fit and have fun with friends! Application required. Click here ([http://www.alwaysactive.org/ALWAYSACTIVE.ORG/ENROLLMENT\\_1.html](http://www.alwaysactive.org/ALWAYSACTIVE.ORG/ENROLLMENT_1.html)) for more information about Always Active or to download an application.

## Tuesday

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**All Classes are FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE TUESDAYS**

10:30 AM Yoga (Bilingual Spanish)  
12:00 PM Hip-Hop Dance  
1:00 PM Walking Group  
3:30 PM World Dance Workout

**YOGA:** The St. Vincent De Paul Wellness Center 1175 Howard Street Tuesdays 9:15-10:15AM **Yoga**

**YOGA:** The St. Vincent De Paul Wellness Center 1175 Howard Street **Yoga and 12 Step Recovery** 2:00-3:00

**YOGA:** SHANTI Yoga for HIV+ Health Every Tuesday 4:15pm – 5:30pm Where: Near 16th Street and Dolores Street  
All levels Hatha Yoga class that focuses on restoring health, balance, and wellness. 40 minutes of movement and 35 minutes of breathing and relaxation. Donations are welcome, and no one is turned away for lack of funds.  
Contact Clayton at [crobbins@shanti.org](mailto:crobbins@shanti.org) or (415) 674-4716 to join us.

**YOGA:** Mindful Yoga at Glide 125 Mason Street Tuesdays 6-7:30PM [www.glide.org](http://www.glide.org)

**YOGA:** Laughing Lotus Yoga Center- 3271 16<sup>th</sup> St (@ Dolores), 415-355-1600 [www.laughinglotus.com](http://www.laughinglotus.com)  
Vinyasa Yoga, Mon- Fri, 2:30- 3:45 PM, \$1.00 - \$5.00 by donation.

**YOGA:** free Outdoor Yoga on the Farm | Hayes Valley Every Tuesday - 12:00 pm | Hayes Valley Farm | 450 Laguna Street, San Francisco, CA Love yoga? Love the outdoors? Hayes Valley Farm has you covered!  
Brandon Bosch leads a free outdoor yoga lesson on Tuesdays at noon at Hayes Valley Farm. Classes tend to follow a slow and intentional hatha flow highlighting an insistent (maybe even annoying) focus on breath. Originally entitled “Mustache Yoga”, Brandon’s class has evolved over the past 9 months, with regular attendees witnessing stunning transformations from “Baby Faced, Butt-chin Yoga” to present day “Short-Cropped Beard Yoga”. These volunteer classes are led under generous permission from resident hummingbirds, hawks, bees and dogs. Beneath elderly trees and amidst youthful veggies, lunchtime yogis have enjoyed a baffling number of sunny days with Brandon this past trimester.

**RUNNING** Social Fun Run | Sports Basement Every Tuesday!! 6:30 pm | Sports Basement | 610 Old Mason St San Francisco, CA 94129 Looking for some fun in the form of a run? Come join the Sports Basement Fun Run every Tuesday at 6:30pm. The group meets in the Community Area and heads out for a 3-to-6-mile run. All levels are welcome!!

## Wednesday

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**All Classes are FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE WEDNESDAYS**

10:30 AM Chair, Stretch, and Boogie  
3:30 PM Yoga (Bilingual Cantonese)  
5:00 PM Salsa Dance (Bilingual)

**YOGA:** The St. Vincent De Paul Wellness Center 1175 Howard Street Wednesdays 9:15-10:15AM **Yoga**

**1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday Somatic Dance Therapy** The St. Vincent De Paul Wellness Center 1175 Howard Street  
Wednesdays 12:30-1:30pm

**YOGA:** The Women's Building- 3543 18<sup>th</sup> St (bet Valencia & Octavia), 415-431-1180  
Vinyasa Yoga, Mon & Wed 6:00- 7:15 PM, \$5.00 by donation.

**TAI CHI 4 FREE** Every Monday & Wednesday 10AM-11AM Glide Foundation Taylor and Ellis 5th Floor  
Finding ones true center energy can be useful in so many ways. It can be integrated into thought processes, balance, and discovering new ways to live the yin and the yang. Taught by a man who had severe back problems for over 20 years of his life is proof that it works! It is (for now) a very intimate group and would be perfect for anyone to at least try it out!

#### **DANCE Zumba Classes at the African American Art & Culture Complex**

Every Wednesday Time: 10:00 a.m. 762 Fulton Street

With Ms. Rossy Leon, ZUMBA is a fusion of Latin and International music - dance themes that create a dynamic, exciting, effective fitness system! The routines feature aerobic/fitness interval training with a combination of fast and slow rhythms that tone and sculpt the body. Zumba utilizes the principles of fitness interval training and resistance training to maximize caloric output, fat burning and total body toning. It is a mixture of body sculpting movements with easy to follow dance steps.

For more information please visit [www.zumbasfparty.com](http://www.zumbasfparty.com).

**LAUGHING HAS HEALTH BENEFITS and HELPS GET RID OF THAT SPARE TIRE** ☺ You've probably heard that laughter is good medicine. When we laugh, our bodies respond positively. There is a decrease in stress hormones (cortisol, adrenaline and dopac) and an increase in beta-endorphins (which lower feelings of depression) and [human growth hormone](#) (which helps protect us against disease and infection). Laughter also prompts our bodies to produce more T-cells and globulins, which bolster our immune systems. By lowering cortisol levels, we may be shedding belly fat as well, or at least issuing fewer orders to store a protective spare tire around our central organs. Cortisol is a dieter's nightmare -- it prompts us to eat (stress eating, anyone?), lowers our post-meal metabolism and then stashes the fat in our midsection. People who are otherwise skinny but who have extra belly fat have measurably higher levels of cortisol, so laughing may help you finish the job that your diet started. **Hump Day Comedy Showcase at The Stud** | SF Wednesdays- 8:00 pm to 10:00 pm | Cost: FREE [The Stud Bar](#) | 399 9th Street, San Francisco, CA Hump Day at The Stud is a lively, twice-monthly showcase of the finest in local Bay Area comedy, presented for your pure enjoyment in true Stud Style. Join hosts Sandra Risser and Suzy Vincent in libations and laughter as local favorites and other surprise guests take the stage to tickle your funnybone. To further enhance your Hump Day happiness, this 21-and-over event is free of charge with \$4 well drinks and \$3 PBRs throughout the show.

## Thursday

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**All Classes are FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE**

#### **THURSDAYS**

11:00– 1:00 PM Chair Massage (1st & 3rd Thursdays of the month)

1:15 PM-2:00 PM Strength Training

**TAI CHI** The St. Vincent De Paul Wellness Center 1175 Howard Street Thursdays 10:30-11:30 Tai Chi

**YOGA: HEALING ARTS THURSDAY WELCOMING STONEWALL CLIENTS**

HOSTED BY RICK ANDREWS WELLNESS COORDINATOR

2nd and 4th Thursdays Beginner Yoga with the fabulous Rick Andrews

1035 Market room 3D (for Stonewall Clients only please)

PROP, Stonewall and/or Speed Project clients are cordially invited to this rotating series of classes to explore a range of meditative and bodywork options designed to enhance your physical, mental and spiritual health and well being. Acupuncture by practitioners from the Immune Enhancement Project and yoga instruction with most fabulous Rick Andrews. Exploring these options can enhance whatever your recovery goals are by giving you tools to heal physical and emotional blocks, give you increased strength and energy, and deepen your connection to yourself and to others. All classes are appropriate for beginners and the curious. We provide everything you will need to attend, including a safe, supportive, and non-judgmental space.

**YOGA: San Fran LGBT Community Center-1800 Market St (@ Octavia), # 415-865-5555**

Thurs 7:00- 9:00 PM. Kundalini Yoga, \$0- \$10 donations accepted. [www.sfcenter.org](http://www.sfcenter.org)

**YOGA: Luxnior Yoga Class at the LGBTQ Center 1800 Market** Every Thursday 7:00-8:30 PM, Room 302 Sliding Scale \$0 - \$10 donation per class no one turned away for lack of funds

**DANCE Thursday Night Belly Dance Class | SF Free School**

Every Thursday - 7:30 pm | Cost: FREE\* \*Free, but donations accepted - RSVP Required. The Happiness Institute | 1720 Market St., San Francisco, CA Learn the basics of the art of belly dance with movements that are core fundamentals of all styles of belly dance around the world. This class is geared for beginners to intermediate students who want to learn and have fun. Music in the class is a wide range of tribal beats to current pop music. Learn how to put movements into a fluid performance style dance for an audience of one or 1,000. Belly Dance Class with KateMost Thursdays at 7:30pm >> Free but RSVP Required through Meetup.com

**HIKE Evening Telegraph Hill Stairway Hike | SF City Guides**

Thursday, May 17, 2012 - 5:30 pm | Meet at Marconi Monument | Lombard St. and Kearny St., Enjoy sweeping views of the Bay and beyond. Climb the Filbert Street steps and experience a different San Francisco: semi-tropical gardens and cottages built in the 1850s. Perhaps even catch a glimpse of the wild parrots. First Thursdays, Third Thursdays – 5:30pm FREE, but donations accepted

**SENIOR FITNESS Always Active Castro Street Senior Center**

Mondays and Thursdays from 10:30-11:30am and Tuesdays from 10-11:00am

Where: Castro Street Senior Center What: Stay fit and have fun with friends! Application required. Click here ([http://www.alwaysactive.org/ALWAYSACTIVE.ORG/ENROLLMENT\\_1.html](http://www.alwaysactive.org/ALWAYSACTIVE.ORG/ENROLLMENT_1.html)) for more information about Always Active or to download an application.

**YOGA: Yoga for the mature LGBT community** Every Thursday 10am – 11am James Howell Studio, 66 Sanchez Street, SF “The class is targeted to the mature LGBT community, but is open to anyone with an open heart and a desire to practice gentle, integrative hatha yoga in a nurturing, loving environment.”

**LAUGHING HAS HEALTH BENEFITS and HELPS GET RID OF THAT SPARE TIRE** 😊 You've probably heard that laughter is good medicine. When we laugh, our bodies respond positively. There is a decrease in stress hormones (cortisol, adrenaline and dopac) and an increase in beta-endorphins (which lower feelings of depression) and [human growth hormone](#) (which helps protect us against disease and infection). Laughter also prompts our bodies to produce more T-cells and globulins, which bolster our immune systems. By lowering cortisol levels, we may be shedding belly fat as well, or at least issuing fewer orders to store a protective spare tire around our central organs. Cortisol is a dieter's nightmare -- it prompts us to eat (stress eating, anyone?), lowers our post-meal metabolism and then stashes the fat in our midsection. People who are otherwise skinny but who have extra belly fat have measurably higher levels of cortisol, so laughing may help you finish the job that your diet started.

**Free “Tickled Pink” Comedy Night** | Thursdays 8:00 pm | Cost: **FREE\*** [Cafe Royale](#) | 800 Post Street San Francisco, CA From the co-producer of Comikaze Lounge, Stefani Silverman, comes the Tickled Pink monthly comedy night at Cafe Royale. **Every fourth Thursday of the month**, Tickle Pink is dedicated to giving your favorite comedians longer sets to stretch out and explore the comic horizon

**Free “Comedy Bodega” Showcase** | Thursdays at Esta Noche 16<sup>th</sup>/Valencia 8:00 pm to 9:30 pm | Cost: **FREE\*** “Comedy Bodega” is a weekly free stand-up comedy showcase hosted by Marga Gomez in the Mission district at “Esta Noche,” San Francisco’s only Latino gay bar. Every Thursday straight and gay comedians tell jokes on a stage that was built for drag queens. All shows are in English.

**Free Comet Club Comedy** | SF Thursdays 8:30 pm to 10:00 pm | Cost: **FREE** [Comet Club](#) | 3111 Fillmore Street, San Francisco, CA Comet Club Comedy is a weekly free comedy showcase at the Comet Club in the Marina district of San Francisco, featuring local Bay Area comedians and special guests.

**“Nightlife on Mars” Underground Comedy Night** | Thursdays 8:30 pm | Cost: **FREE**

[Murphy’s Pub](#) | 217 Kearny Street, San Francisco, CA 94108 Nightlife on Mars is a local comedy troupe consisting of Joe Nguyen, Adam McLaughlin and Ryan Cronin. You may recognize them from local comedy clubs or as the disheveled guys at the bar. They run a fairly kickass free weekly comedy show in a private room at Murphy’s Pub in the Financial District of SF. Drink Special: \$1 off draft beers during the show.

**Free: Harvey’s Funny Tuesdays comedy** Every Tuesday 9pm – 11pm 500 Castro Street (at 18th),

**Free Local Comedy Night | Comet Club** [Every Thursday](#) - 9:00 pm | Comet Club | 3111 Fillmore Street

**Free Cup ‘o Comedy** | Richmond District [Thursday, July 12, 2012](#) - 7:00 pm | Emma’s Coffee House | 5549 Geary

## Friday

**STRESS REDUCTION/EXERCISE/FITNESS** [Saint Vincent De Paul Wellness Center 1175 Howard Street](#)  
Fridays 9:15-11:30am Stress Reduction/exercise/fitness

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**All Classes are FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE**

#### **FRIDAYS**

10:30 AM Zumba Gold-Low Impact (Bilingual Spanish)

12:00 PM Bollywood Dance

**YOGA: Donation Vinyasa Flow Yoga at the Sun Room** [Fridays 12:30pm – 1:30pm](#) Donation yoga classes on Fridays at 12:30 at the Sun Room (20th and Mission) taught by James. Vinyasa Flow w/James: James will lead a class of breath-synchronized movement. In it, breath guides the smooth transitions between poses and subtle movements in the poses. Build, strength, endurance and flexibility. Unite body, mind and soul. Come experience the joy of moving asana as an expression of Self. <http://www.sunroomsf.com/>

**WALKING** [South of Market Architecture Stroll | SoMa](#) [Every Friday](#) - 10:00 am | Cost: **FREE\*** Yerba Buena Lane | Yerba Buena Ln and Mission, SF [South of Market Architecture Stroll | SoMa](#) Compare Classical Revival, modern, postmodern and green trends in this free San Francisco City Guides guided walking tour. Architecture includes building facades, public places, and public art. Zigzag and saunter along main streets and back alleys toward the emerging Transbay Terminal complex. Tour Schedule [Every Friday](#) at 10am

## Saturday

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**All Classes are FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE**

#### **SATURDAYS**

10:30 AM Family Zumba

**YOGA:** Mindful Yoga at Glide Foundation 125 Mason Street Saturdays 9:30-11AM [www.glide.org](http://www.glide.org)

Free Marina Green Fitness Court Bootcamp | Marina Every Saturday - All Day | Cost: FREE Marina Green Fitness Court | Webster St. and Marina Blvd. Come try the 7-minute National Fitness Campaign Workout and see what Core Training, Squatting, Pushing, Lunging, Pulling, Agility and Bending can achieve. On-site staff will be available every Saturday and Sunday in April, 8am-5pm. Bootcamps held every 2 hours (8am, 10am, 12pm, 2pm, 4pm), so be on time and register on site to join in and challenge yourself.

#### **DANCE** Dance & Drumming - Les Bantus Congolese Dance and Drum Classes

African American Art & Culture Complex 762 Fulton Street, San Francisco,

Adult Classes (Dance Studio A, 3rd Floor) Ongoing Classes; FREE

When: Every Saturday Time: Dance - 2 p.m. Time: Drumming - 3 p.m.

Dance with former lead choreographer of the Congolese National Dance Company with renowned Master teacher Sandor Diabankouezi. For more information, please contact us at 415/302 8692.

#### **YOGA:** Free Saturday Yoga in the Park | Alamo Square Park

Every Saturday - 9:00 am | Alamo Square Park | Fulton & Pierce Free Saturday Yoga in the Park | Alamo Square Park Come and play outdoors, in nature. Enjoy inverting, reverting and melting into the ground. Join us on weekends for a rejuvenating morning flow and meditation for body, mind, and spirit. Purusha yogis teach free yoga on Saturday mornings in Alamo Square Park at 9:00am as part of the Purusha Seva Project.

#### **YOGA:** Free Outdoor Yoga Day | Golden Gate Park

Every Saturday - 11:00 am | Rec Field: Golden Gate Park | Big Rec Field, Golden Gate Park

Come and play outdoors, in nature. Enjoy inverting, reverting and melting into the ground. Join us on weekends for a rejuvenating morning flow and meditation for body, mind, and spirit. Purusha yogis teach free yoga on Saturday mornings in Golden Gate Park at 1:00am as part of the Purusha Seva Project.

#### **DANCE** Salsa & Bachata Dance Class | Dolores Park

Every Saturday - 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm | Mission Dolores Park | 19th Street & Dolores Street

Salsa & Bachata Dance Class | Dolores Park Enjoy meeting complete strangers or bring a partner while engaging in dance styles from the Caribbean. You will be given an introductory class on Cuban Salsa as well as the romantic Bachata from the Dominican Republic. No better way to enjoy this dance than outside in the sun. However if it rains, please assume class has been cancelled.

#### **WALKING** The Ozanam Wellness Center and Stand Up 8 presents The Walking and Running Club

Open to all capabilities and those willing to make a change in their lives for the better. Join us as we learn all aspects of healthy exercise such as the importance of good nutrition, hydration and building endurance safely. Culminating in a local race (to be determined). Participants will also receive incentives as they continue to participate in the program. When: Saturdays, from 11:30 to 1:30

Where: 1175 Howard Street Contact: Sally Rosen 415-552-5561x301 Please wear comfortable clothing and shoes.

**WALKING** San Francisco Walking Dykes meet in Golden Gate Park Every Saturday 11am – 12pm |FREE Conservatory of Flowers in Golden Gate Park (In Front) The purpose of the group is to build community for lesbians and queer-identified women in the San Francisco/Bay Area while promoting health and wellness. For more information, or to be added to the email list, mhughes56@comcast.net.

Free Marina Green Fitness Court Bootcamp | Marina Every Saturday - Bootcamps held every 2 hours (8am, 10am, 12pm, 2pm, 4pm), so be on time and register on site to join in and challenge yourself.

**DANCE** Magnet & SFSwingJam.com Monthly Dance Party 7:00 - 10:00pm on the 4th Saturday each month Magnet 4122 18th St. @ Castro. Swing lessons & Jam Dance Party at Magnet by SFSwingJam.com and QueerJitterbugs.com open to all! FREE lesson & dance but we do suggest you tip your teacher & DJ as appreciated donations. NO ONE TURNED AWAY FOR LACK OF FUNDS. 7pm basic lesson Swing. (suggested \$10 donation) 7:30 to 9:30pmish DANCE. (suggested \$5 donation) OPEN TO ALL: Mixed & all ages More info at [www.QueerJitterbugs.com](http://www.QueerJitterbugs.com) or [www.SFSwingJam.com](http://www.SFSwingJam.com) Arrive early to park or take MUNI.

**ZUMBA** Saturdays 10:00 am to 11:00 am | Cost: FREE Potrero Hill Recreation Center | 801 Arkansas Street This is a weekly drop-in class on **Saturdays from 10-11 am** through from **March 22 through May 9, 2014**, taught by licensed Zumba instructor December K. Zumba is a 60-minute cardio workout featuring a playlist full of hot Latin/international/pop songs that will have you twirling, shimmying, and forgetting that you're working out. If you're a non-dancer, you'll find that there's enough repetition to make it easy to catch on; if you're a dancer, you'll love the opportunity to add your own flair to each movement; and if you're human, you'll leave class having burned hundreds of calories.

## Sunday

**YOGA** Free Sunday Yoga in the Park | Dolores Park

Every Sunday – 11:00 am | Cost: FREE\* | Dolores Park Free Sunday Yoga in the Park | Dolores Park Free Yoga on Sundays in Dolores Park at 11am, provided by the teachers of the Purusha Yoga community. Come and play outdoors, in nature. Enjoy inverting, reverting and melting into the ground. Join us on weekends for a rejuvenating morning flow

**YOGA** Sports Basement- 1590 Bryant St (bet 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>), # 415-575-3000

Every Sunday 1:00- 2:30 PM Yoga classes (alternating styles), Free [www.sportsbasement.com](http://www.sportsbasement.com)

**DANCE** Lindy in the Park: Free Outdoor Swing Dance | Golden Gate Park Every Sunday – 11:00 am | Cost: FREE\* | Golden Gate Park JFK Drive at 8th Ave Get ready to swing in Golden Gate Park every sunny Sunday at “Lindy in the Park” – a weekly free event near the de Young Museum when the streets of Golden Gate Park are closed to traffic and the dancers take over.

**WALKING** Victorian Walking Tour | Pacific Heights Sunday, May 20, 2012 - 2:00 pm | Meet at 1801 Bush | 1801 Bush St, San Francisco, CA

As we walk in the neighborhood of Lafayette Square, you'll learn about Victorian lifestyles and San Francisco's illustrious history. See some steep streets and many fabulous views.

**ROLLER SKATING!** Golden Gate Park Sunday Roller Disco Party Sunday 1:00 to 5:00 pm Golden Gate Park | 6th Avenue and Kennedy

**DANCE** Free Zumba Dance Party In the Park | SF Sundays - 12:00 pm | Cost: FREE [Margaret Hayward Playground](http://MargaretHaywardPlayground.com) | 1016 Laguna Street Classes are taught by Willa Zhou, certified Zumba instructor. *First timers welcome as well as song requests. Sundays at Noon (arrive 5-10 mins early)*



The San Francisco Free School [www.sffreeschool.com](http://www.sffreeschool.com)

Free Classes For A Free Community Free classes for a free community at The San Francisco Free School - 7 days a week- yoga, art, music, dance, theater, poetry, philosophy, meditation, etc. Please feel free to explore this website to find information about our community and what we've discovered so far.... Please go to our Meetup page <http://www.meetup.com/SF-Free-School/> to find out what classes we are currently running.

# WALKING

San Francisco Walking Tours | City Guides [www.sfcityguides.org/](http://www.sfcityguides.org/)



## Free Nature Walks in San Francisco: Explore local birds, plants, parks and trails (from about.com)

Because a considerable portion of San Francisco was built upon dunes, it's an accomplishment to have as much green space as we do. Both Golden Gate Park and the Presidio defied natural odds by sprouting forests where sand and grasslands dominated (with a bit of help from landscape architects like John McLaren, of course).

Our greenbelts also mean plenty of nature. Here are some of the places offering free nature walks and classes throughout San Francisco.

**1. San Francisco Botanical Garden** The San Francisco Botanical Garden (at Strybing Arboretum) is 55 acres of plants and flowers representing a variety of climate zones. The Botanical Garden offers free docent-led guided walks of the gardens (daily), as well as free birding walks, and family walks on various days of the month. In Golden Gate Park - Enter off 9th and Lincoln Way

**2. Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy** The Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, established in 1981, assists with park research and conservation efforts. Throughout the month, the Conservancy's calendar has a variety of free walks and educational tours in the various parks of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Some walks are in San Francisco, while others take place in GGNRA parks in Marin County. Events are free but some require an RSVP by telephone (indicated on the listing). Be sure to check the website ahead of time. Walks include: Bird walks, wildflower walks, and park tours. San Francisco/Bay Area parks in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area: Presidio San Francisco & Crissy Field, Fort Funston, Ocean Beach, Fort Point, Alcatraz, Marin Headlands Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy Website

**3. San Francisco Nature Education** Public programs through San Francisco Nature Education include the popular Heron Watch in Golden Gate Park. Naturalists and interns help visitors observe the park's nesting herons -- through spotting scopes. Heron Watch starts in April (nesting season) and continues through May.

On the first Saturday of each month, San Francisco Nature Education also conducts a free birding walk in Golden Gate Park.



**4. San Francisco Naturalist Society** The Naturalist Society lists birds walks, wildflower hikes, garden tours, ecology lessons and a variety of events on topics of nature in San Francisco and the Bay Area. Some of these events are cross-listed at other sites like the Golden Gate National Parks calendar.

# LOW COST GYMS

## **Salvation Army's**

### **Ray & Joan Kroc Corps Community Center and Railton Place**

240 Turk St., San Francisco, CA, 94102

Hours: Monday-Friday 6AM-9PM, Saturday 8AM-9PM, Sunday- Closed

Contact Phone: 415-345-3400

Membership Cost: \$20.00 a month for adults

\$10.00 a month for children and seniors

Scholarships available- visit the Welcome desk; bring a current ID or passport to apply.

About: In 2004, Joan Kroc donated approximately \$1.5 billion to The Salvation Army, specifically for the development of community centers across the country, similar to the landmark Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center in San Diego. This \$60 million center is the largest redevelopment project The Army has undertaken in its more than 125-year history in San Francisco. The Salvation Army is serving more than 2,000 people annually at the 135,380 square-foot Kroc center in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco with an array of recreational and educational components for youths and adults open to the public at low cost. Some of these features include: a college regulation gymnasium with Desso Armstrong Linoleum Line of Multipurpose Sports Flooring, dance studio, fitness center, climbing wall, outdoor courtyard, activity rooms for mentoring and education, a swimming pool and a traditional Salvation Army worship center. There is also a state of the art game room, computer lab and library.

**Embarcadero YMCA** 169 Steuart Street SF, CA 94105 (415) 957-9622

Mon - Fri: 5:30 am - 9:45 pm, Saturday: 8:00 am - 7:45 pm, Sunday: 9:00 am - 5:45 pm

Membership Fees: Adult enrollment Fee \$99.00: \$75.00 per month

Day Passes are \$5 for members of other YMCA's and \$15 for nonmembers.

**Financial Assistance Available.** Go in with proof of residence and proof of income or apply online. With stunning views of the Bay Bridge and Treasure Island, the Embarcadero YMCA is a premiere health and wellness center open for all members of our community--a focal point for community support, wellness services and active living. We provide wrap-around services to enhance the lives of youth, individuals, families and active older adults in our service area. Enjoy our 25 meter pool, 90+ weekly group exercise classes, a quiet stretch room or step on to our cardio machines and link up with Netpulse and FitLinx to enhance your workout! Our full court basketball court also has volleyball, dodgeball and wheelchair rugby games. Finally, our cycle and exercise studios make building up a sweat easy with inspiring trained instructors who will take your workout to the next level. Our equipment includes treadmills, Precor elliptical trainers, stairmasters, upright and recumbent bikes, Cybex strength training equipment including the Total Access line of inclusive fitness machines, free weights and a brand new circuit of LifeFitness Signature Series machines. Wellness: Stress reduction seminars, massage, posture and gait analysis, nutritional consulting and mind/body programs help members and neighbors find ways to balance their lives for optimal wellness. Martial Arts: Hapkido and Aikido strengthen your body, focus your mind and sharpen your reflexes with our small group martial arts classes Drop in Group Exercise From Boot Camp on the shores of bay to a full yoga and Pilates class schedule, the Embarcadero YMCA offers members 97 weekly classes for every fitness level.

**James Howell Studio- 66 Sanchez St (bet 14<sup>th</sup> & Duboce)**

Alternating styles of Yoga and Dance, [www.jameshowellstudio.com](http://www.jameshowellstudio.com)

**See site for days and times, by donation**

# Depression and anxiety: Exercise eases symptoms

Depression symptoms often improve with exercise. Here are some realistic tips to help you get started and stay motivated.

By Mayo Clinic staff

When you have anxiety or depression, exercise often seems like the last thing you want to do. But once you get motivated, exercise can make a big difference.

Exercise helps prevent and improve a number of health problems, including high blood pressure, diabetes and arthritis. Research on anxiety, depression and exercise shows that the psychological and physical benefits of exercise can also help reduce anxiety and improve mood.

The links between anxiety, depression and exercise aren't entirely clear — but working out can definitely help you relax and make you feel better. Exercise may also help keep anxiety and depression from coming back once you're feeling better.

## How does exercise help depression and anxiety?

- Exercise probably helps ease depression in a number of ways, which may include:
- Releasing feel-good brain chemicals that may ease depression (neurotransmitters and endorphins)
- Reducing immune system chemicals that can worsen depression
- Increasing body temperature, which may have calming effects
- Exercise has many psychological and emotional benefits too. It can help you:
- Gain confidence. Meeting exercise goals or challenges, even small ones, can boost your self-confidence. Getting in shape can also make you feel better about your appearance.
- Take your mind off worries. Exercise is a distraction that can get you away from the cycle of negative thoughts that feed anxiety and depression.
- Get more social interaction. Exercise may give you the chance to meet or socialize with others. Just exchanging a friendly smile or greeting as you walk around your neighborhood can help your mood.
- Cope in a healthy way. Doing something positive to manage anxiety or depression is a healthy coping strategy. Trying to feel better by drinking alcohol, dwelling on how badly you feel, or hoping anxiety or depression will go away on its own can lead to worsening symptoms.

## What kind of exercise is best?

The word "exercise" may make you think of running laps around the gym. But exercise includes a wide range of activities that boost your activity level to help you feel better. Certainly running, lifting weights, playing basketball and other fitness activities that get your heart pumping can help. But so can gardening, washing your car, or strolling around the block and other less intense activities. Anything that gets you off the couch and moving is exercise that can help improve your mood. You don't have to do all your exercise at once either. Broaden how you think of exercise and find ways to fit activity into your routine. Add small amounts of physical activity throughout your day. For example, take the stairs instead of the elevator. Park a little farther away from your work to fit in a short walk. Or, if you live close to your job, consider biking to work.