How to Walk Outdoors Safely During COVID-19

Is it safe to go outside?  Can we go for walks?

Yes, it is safe to go outside and take walks.  COVID-19 is less likely to spread outdoors than indoors.  It is important to still follow CDC’s social distancing guidance.  Taking walks and enjoying outdoor spaces helps reduce stress and anxiety, cures cabin fever and is good for your physical and mental health.

People have always gone to parks, other conservation lands and trails to find respite, seek solitude and restoration.  We need these places now more than ever and they are getting unprecedented visitation.

Easy guidelines for safely taking walks during this crisis:

• **Stay home if you are sick** or feeling any COVID-19 symptoms such as fever, coughing and or trouble breathing.
• **Stay local** – take your walks in outdoor spaces that are close to home.  Remember that restrooms are not available at most outdoor areas.
• **Only walk close to people who live with you.**
• **Practice social distancing to stay 6 feet from everyone** who does not live with you.  Avoid close contact, such as shaking hands, hugging or high-fives.
• **Maintain distance from others** in parking lots, at trailheads and scenic views and places where people tend to congregate. **Don’t form groups** or gather with others on the trail.
• **When you encounter others walking on trails, step aside** so that they can maintain a safe distance as they pass.
• **If you are close to other people who do not live with you, wear a face covering** over your mouth and nose.
• Avoid unnecessary contact with surfaces that are often touched such as handrails and benches.  Avoid use of all playground equipment.
• **Keep visits short. Leave room for everyone to take walks** and spend time in outdoor areas without causing trails and parks to become too crowded for safety.
• If you find a trail or outdoor area crowded, go to a different place or return at another time to visit.  **See ExploreRI.org to find other nearby trails** that are not as well known.
• **If parking lots are full**, please do not park along roadsides or in other undesignated areas.  **Please choose a different area to walk or return when parking is available.**  Parking overflowing onto nearby streets creates tensions with.

It is important that everyone does their part to use these places in a way that respects each other and follows public health guidance.  Together we can ensure that everyone stays safe and healthy!