

# Rock Your Body

*Boulder offers many ways to stay fit in the new year*

Story and photos by Rose Davidson

Colorado is known for its environmental efforts, but it's not just nature that's being kept in good shape there.

In Boulder in particular, citizens are embracing an active lifestyle that seems to blend seamlessly with the beautiful outdoors that already exists in the city. I visited the city just a few months ago and was instantly inspired by the vast expanses of open space and the extensive array of options for taking advantage of it all.

**Chautauqua Park, one of Boulder's most popular parks, connects to the Flatirons by several trails.**



A new year often means new goals for improving one's health, and 2014 is no different. While vacation can sometimes squash those goals in the blink of an eye, Boulder might just hold the motivation you need to fully commit to staying fit. If maintaining a healthy lifestyle is part of the itinerary, a little Colorado cardio could be just what the doctor ordered.

## Biking

From leisurely rides to rigorous mountain biking, there's a lane, route or path for every kind of cyclist.

Colorado was recently ranked the second most bike-friendly state in the country, with many active citizens using bikes as a way to get around town. And with more than 300 miles of bikeway in Boulder alone, the city supports cycling as a primary form of transportation.

For those only in the area for a short while, the Boulder B-cycle bike share program is an easy option for temporary bike rentals. The growing system has more than



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## {travel}

20 stations for selecting and returning bicycles, and they're distributed throughout the city for easy access from various locations. It's just \$7 per day or \$20 for a week-long pass, making it a greener alternative that costs significantly less green than renting a car.

While the shareable cycles aren't meant for more rough-and-tumble activities, there are other rental options. If mountain biking sounds like a more suitable form of exercise for you, there are plenty of areas to pedal through in Boulder.

The Valmont Bike Park is just one option; the cycle-centric park is a sanctuary for riders of all experience levels. Mountain bikers can take to one of the various trails or, for the more adventurous, head to the terrain park, replete with dirt jumps and other features for trying out some stunts.

While not as varied as the numerous trails at Valmont, the Boulder Creek Path is also a good biking option – the casual uphill ride through the woods bends along the Boulder Creek for some serene views of Colorado's nature scene.

### Hiking

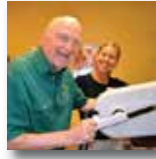
No matter the difficulty level desired, Boulder has the hiking trail for it. Open Space and Mountain Parks is the organization that oversees many of the city's outdoor areas, preserving more than 45,000 acres of land while managing 146 miles of trails. There are trails for everything from plant identification and animal observation to simply walking the dog.

The Flatirons, made up mainly of five gigantic rock formations, tower majestically over the city. They're perhaps the most distinguishable landmark in the area, so they're a natural focal point of physical activity.

Trails to the Flatirons can be accessed through Chautauqua Park, one of the most popular in Boulder for its wide variety of amenities, including tennis courts, a playground and a picnic area. While the Flatirons trails can be fairly difficult, others such as the Mesa trail (for beginners) and the Royal Arch trail (of moderate difficulty) can be less strenuous alternatives.

If hiking the Flatirons is a must, there's a 1.1-mile trail that goes up to the first Flatiron. It requires quite a bit of physical ex-

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Boulder's Pearl Street Mall is known for its outdoor shopping and its street performers.

ertion, but the view from the summit may just be worth the effort.

### Walking

In the heart of Boulder is Pearl Street Mall, a four-block stretch of pedestrian-friendly outdoor shopping. The smoke-free strip is closed off to street traffic, offering an idyllic area for walkers to take in some crisp Colorado air.

Especially on weekends, the atmosphere has an exciting quality. Street performers, such as a contortionist and a man whose specialty is creating giant bubbles with a rope, come out of the woodwork. Both have become popular entertainers among frequent visitors.

Not only is the outdoor venue a great place to get in a little light exercise, but the businesses themselves support the healthy lifestyle that Boulder personifies. Shops such as Peppercorn, a gourmet kitchen boutique, provide ways for shoppers to bolster their good health with imported foods and just about every cooking gadget in existence.

Just a short stroll from the middle of the mall, the Boulder County Farmers' Market sets up shop every Wednesday and Saturday in the warmer months. The vendors sell fresh produce, meats and cheese – much of it organic – and pastries and wines can be purchased as well.

A little bit farther down the street is the Boulder Dushanbe Teahouse; it's one of several tea houses in the area, but this one is special in origin. The establishment served as a gift from Boulder's sister city of Dushanbe, Tajikistan, with many of the building's elements having been created in the Asian country before arriving at the tea house. **CS**

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