

# Hikes Around Idaho Falls To Keep You Moving This Summer

Summer in Idaho Falls is the perfect time to get outside, stay active, and enjoy everything eastern Idaho has to offer. One of the best ways to improve your physical health while experiencing the outdoors is hiking. Whether you are looking for a relaxing riverside walk or a more challenging uphill climb, hiking provides excellent exercise without placing excessive strain on your joints.

At **Summit Orthopaedics**, we encourage patients to stay active safely throughout the year. Hiking is a great low-impact activity that can help improve balance, strengthen muscles, increase endurance, and support overall joint health. Choosing the right trail and preparing properly can help you enjoy the benefits of hiking while reducing the risk of injury.

If you are looking for scenic hikes near Idaho Falls this summer, these local trails offer excellent opportunities for movement, exercise, and outdoor adventure.

## Why Hiking Is Great For Joint And Muscle Health

Many people assume exercise has to be intense to be effective, but hiking offers a more balanced approach to staying active. Walking on natural terrain engages muscles throughout the legs, hips, core, and back while improving coordination and stability.

Hiking can also help support:

- Joint flexibility
- Bone strength
- Cardiovascular health
- Balance and coordination
- Muscle endurance
- Stress reduction

Unlike high-impact activities, hiking allows many people to stay active with less repetitive stress on the knees and joints. Trail difficulty can also be adjusted based on your fitness level and comfort.

The key is listening to your body and choosing trails that match your current physical abilities.

## Explore North Menan Butte Trail

For hikers looking for a more challenging outdoor experience, the **North Menan Butte Trail** offers both exercise and incredible scenery. Formed thousands of years ago through volcanic activity, the butte is now recognized as a National Natural Landmark known for its unique geological features.

This trail provides a moderate hiking challenge with steep sections, loose gravel, and rocky terrain. The climb rewards hikers with panoramic views and an unforgettable look at Idaho's natural landscape.

Because portions of the trail can become slippery, proper hiking footwear with strong traction is highly recommended. Staying hydrated is equally important, especially during warmer summer temperatures.

This hike is ideal for individuals looking to increase endurance while enjoying a more physically demanding trail near Idaho Falls.

## Enjoy A Relaxing Walk At Cress Creek Nature Trail

Not every hike needs to be strenuous to provide health benefits. The **Cress Creek Nature Trail** is an excellent option for beginners, families, or anyone wanting a gentler outdoor experience.

This scenic trail follows the South Fork of the Snake River and offers a peaceful setting with beautiful water views and shaded areas along the path. Portions of the trail are paved, making it more accessible and comfortable for casual hikers.

The easier terrain makes this trail ideal for:

- First-time hikers
- Older adults
- Families with children
- Recovery walks
- Light cardiovascular activity

Picnic tables and benches along the trail also provide convenient opportunities to rest and enjoy the scenery during your hike.

For many patients recovering from minor orthopaedic injuries or looking for low-impact movement, easier trails like Cress Creek can be a great way to stay active safely.

## Experience The Idaho Falls Greenbelt Loop

The **Greenbelt Loop Trail** combines exercise with some of the best scenery in Idaho Falls. Located along the Snake River, this paved trail winds through parks, gardens, local attractions, and scenic river views.

The Greenbelt is especially popular because it offers flexibility. Some visitors enjoy a short walk, while others complete the full loop for a longer workout. Along the way, hikers can enjoy:

- The Idaho Falls waterfall
- The Japanese Friendship Garden
- Parks and river views
- Local restaurants and shops
- Seasonal events like the farmers market

Because the trail is paved and relatively mild, it is also a popular option for walking, jogging, biking, and family outings.

For patients looking to improve mobility or maintain activity levels with minimal joint stress, paved trails like the Greenbelt often provide an excellent solution.

## Common Hiking Injuries To Watch For

Although hiking is considered low-impact exercise, injuries can still happen if the body is unprepared or trail conditions become difficult. Understanding common hiking-related injuries can help hikers stay safer on the trail this summer.

Some of the most common orthopaedic concerns associated with hiking include:

- Foot pain and blisters
- Sprained ankles
- Knee pain
- Joint inflammation
- Low back discomfort
- Muscle strain

Fortunately, many of these issues can be reduced or prevented with proper preparation, supportive gear, and good movement habits.

## Preventing Foot Pain And Blisters

Foot discomfort is one of the most common problems hikers experience. Long distances, uneven terrain, and poorly fitted footwear can quickly lead to blisters, soreness, or inflammation.

Wearing supportive hiking boots designed for the terrain is one of the best ways to protect your feet. Proper socks also matter more than many people realize. Breathable, moisture-wicking socks can help reduce friction and minimize blister formation.

Supportive insoles may also improve comfort for hikers dealing with arch pain or conditions like plantar fasciitis. Properly lacing boots and allowing enough room for foot movement can further reduce pressure points during longer hikes.

Taking time to choose the right footwear can make a major difference in overall hiking comfort.

## How To Reduce The Risk Of Ankle Injuries

Uneven terrain, rocks, and loose gravel can increase the risk of ankle injuries during hikes. Sprains often occur when the ankle twists beyond its normal range of motion, causing damage to supporting ligaments.

One of the simplest ways to reduce ankle injury risk is staying aware of trail conditions and watching your footing carefully. Supportive hiking boots and ankle braces may also provide additional stability for hikers with previous injuries or chronic ankle weakness.

Strengthening exercises and balance training can further improve ankle stability over time. At **Summit Orthopaedics**, we often recommend preventative exercises for patients who enjoy outdoor activities but have a history of ankle instability or sports injuries.

## Protecting Your Knees While Hiking

Knee pain is another common complaint among hikers, especially during steep climbs or downhill descents. Challenging terrain places extra pressure on the knees, particularly for individuals with arthritis, prior injuries, or joint inflammation.

Trekking poles can be extremely helpful because they redistribute some of the load away from the knees during hikes. Stretching before hiking and maintaining flexibility in the hips and legs can also help reduce strain on the joints.

Some hikers benefit from compression sleeves or supportive knee braces for additional stability during longer hikes.

Staying active is still important even for individuals with mild knee discomfort. The goal is finding safe ways to continue moving without placing excessive stress on the joints.

## **Managing Back And Spine Discomfort During Hikes**

Carrying backpacks, uneven walking surfaces, and long hiking distances can sometimes contribute to neck, back, and spine discomfort. Interestingly, hiking can also help strengthen the core and back muscles that support spinal health when done properly.

Choosing a properly fitted backpack is important for distributing weight evenly across the body. Heavy or poorly balanced packs often increase stress on the neck, shoulders, and lower back.

Stretching, strengthening exercises, and maintaining proper posture while hiking can also help minimize discomfort. Patients with ongoing spine or back pain should consult an orthopaedic specialist before attempting more difficult trails.

## **Stay Active Safely This Summer**

Hiking is one of the best ways to stay active, improve joint health, and enjoy Idaho's beautiful outdoor scenery during the summer months. Whether you choose a challenging climb like North Menan Butte or a relaxing walk along the Greenbelt, movement plays an important role in supporting long-term orthopaedic health.

At **Summit Orthopaedics** in Idaho Falls, we help patients stay active through expert treatment for sports injuries, joint pain, spine conditions, tendon injuries, and musculoskeletal disorders. If pain, instability, or an injury is limiting your ability to enjoy outdoor activities, our experienced team is here to help.

Contact **Summit Orthopaedics** today to schedule an evaluation and learn more about personalized treatment options that can keep you moving comfortably all summer long.

## **Related Questions**

### **Is hiking good for joint health?**

Yes. Hiking is considered a low-impact activity that can improve flexibility, strengthen muscles, and support overall joint health when done safely.

**What should I wear while hiking?**

Supportive hiking boots, moisture-wicking socks, comfortable clothing, and weather-appropriate layers are all important for hiking safely.

**How can I prevent ankle injuries while hiking?**

Proper footwear, paying attention to terrain, strengthening exercises, and supportive ankle braces may help reduce injury risk.

**Can hiking help with back pain?**

In some cases, hiking may strengthen core and back muscles that support the spine. However, patients with chronic back pain should consult a specialist before strenuous hikes.