

# OG PARKOUR



Rebuild Health and Habits for  
Enduring Energy and Vitality

# W JONES

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Enduring Energy and Vitality

WARREN JONES

# O G

— — — — —  
\oh-jee\

1. Original Gangster: Signifies someone present at the start, embodying true essence through experience and earned respect. Foundational pioneer or influential, regardless of age.
3. Old Guy / Girl: Casual, often affectionate / teasing term for someone significantly older.

# P a r k o u r

— — — — —  
\pär-'kür\

1. A discipline of movement focused on moving from one point to another in a complex environment, as efficiently and quickly as possible. *Practitioners, known as traceurs, navigate obstacles by running, jumping, climbing, and vaulting, aiming for fluidity and control.*
2. A philosophy that emphasizes overcoming physical and mental barriers through adaptability and practiced technique.

\* \* \*

*e.g., The traceur used her parkour skills to quickly cross parked cars, a park bench and a sea of people to catch a stroller racing from an inattentive teen.*

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### Copyright Page

OG Parkour Nonfiction This Book edition contains the complete text of the original works.

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### Quotes

Those who are able to see beyond the shadows and lies of their culture will never be understood,  
let alone believed by the masses - Plato

#

The nature of life is to exist, renew and evolve, performing Purpose of the ecosystem,  
continuously refreshing to stay in balance with changes in matter, energy and other life in the  
Universe. - Jones

#

It is through knowledge and acceptance of the nature of our existence, that we might learn and  
understand how to survive. - Jones

## Dedication

*to my brother and best friend Kevin*



## Prologue

### *Falling into a Story*

At 61, I feel like a rich stew that's been simmering for years. The result is good: I'm strong enough for work and play, capable of driving across the country or dancing all night.

I'm not just "still" doing things; in many ways, I'm doing more than I did in my 30s and 40s. Of course, I'm not the man I was in my 20s. Tasks that were effortless then now require half my energy. And when I push too hard and get hurt, recovery takes much longer.

This book was born from one of those setbacks. While healing from an injury that would have been trivial in my youth, I began to write. The story of my recovery formed Act 2: The Fall. My reflections on why I take these physical risks at my age became Act 1: Living Parkour. Together, they created a story that felt complete on its own.

Only after drafting them, even as my leg neared recovery, did I understand the story wasn't finished. Something that hadn't caught my attention still needed healing: my confidence. I had begun to fear anything beyond a basic leap or side-wall bounce. So began **Act 3: Becoming Parkour**. Rebuilding confidence, I saw, might take longer than rebuilding my body.

The solution, forming Act 3's core, was returning to basics – learning or re-learning movements I'd never formally studied as a single pursuit.

This is my story. I never trained in parkour; I didn't even know the word until I was nearly 50. Upon discovering it – its roots in indigenous movement, adapted by a Naval Officer for military training, then evolving for firefighting, sports, film, and general fitness – I saw it mirrored my life. Its philosophy became a healthy metaphor for parts of my journey; its physicality explained my innate desire to defy gravity and more, to feel less bound by the given constraints of our world.

With **Act 3**, I aimed to define my *OG Parkour* from the ground-up. This had been mere organic extensions of my youth: academy sports, military officer training, and innate movement. Now, I needed to make them repeatable, structured. To rebuild confidence, I would, for the first time, 'try' to translate that organic past into a step-by-step program. Would it work? As I write this, I don't yet know.

I began Act 3 while preparing for vacation. After four weeks of a mostly successful physical recovery, I was set to sail with my youngest son, celebrating his 21st birthday. I worried about the timing – a week-long all adult “drinking and eating orgy at sea” right after healing. I was right to worry, but not for the reasons I thought.

## Part One: Act 1: Living Parkour

### Leaping the Canyon of Fear

The run between the Space Telescope Science Institute and my home in Hampden is just over a kilometer. A ten-minute walk, fewer if I run. Today, I ran—not for the usual reason of an 8:00 am meeting, but simply because I didn’t feel like *not* running. My energy was high. Having lost twenty pounds in the last two months, I felt light, free, and ready to move.

The path itself is boring: a traditional inner-Baltimore street lined with rows of simple homes. To make it interesting, I overlaid a different reality, borrowed from another W. Jones—the fictional Dr. Henry Walton “Indiana” Jones, Jr. An onlooker would have seen a spry older man jogging. A more careful observer might have noticed his feet landing precisely in the center of every sidewalk square, even the long rectangles formed by repairs. When the squares ran out, he leaped the curb to the street, landing only in the center of each wide, painted crosswalk strip.

In my head, I was no longer in a neighborhood. I was crossing a canyon where a bridge had long since collapsed, leaving only exposed pylons. The only way to the other side—the only

way to save the kids—was to leap from pylon to pylon without a single mistake.

Of course, no one's life was at stake. The day was warm, and the heavy cream in my backpack from the Mom's grocery store at STScI could sour if I didn't get it home. But at worst, it would be ten minutes. The cream would be fine.

Was it crazy for a 61-year-old man to run around pretending to be someone he's not, somewhere he's not? Absolutely. But I was mostly just bored, or more accurately, avoiding boredom. Life becomes infinitely more interesting with a minor change of perspective.

My evening run the day before was less boring. I was on the trail that winds from the Remington softball field toward the Gilman School. There, you have trees, water, and rocks—bits of natural splendor to observe. On that path, I don't have to imagine leaping from obstacle to obstacle; I simply do. Fallen trees, exposed roots, overhanging branches, sections of the path washed out by rain—it's a natural course.

It was getting late. Daylight is short in the fall, so I opted to cut my 10k round trip short and take the trail that branches off to the right, leading past another Space Telescope building to the Johns Hopkins stadium.

The path was blocked. A sign declared the short walking bridge closed, the trail with it. It was odd. The bridge was seriously barricaded with multiple orange cones, tape, rope, and net. Unlike the typical Baltimore bridge closure—a simple gate and a sign that pedestrians universally interpret as “proceed at your own risk”—someone *really* didn't want people here.

But it was a short path, and the bridge wasn't absolutely necessary. Below, large rocks lined the creek, placed for crossing perhaps a hundred years earlier. I could see a clear path to the water's edge and two routes across the rocks—far less complex than my imagined canyon of

sidewalk squares.

Jogging down to the creek, I slowed, then stopped.

*Leap, leap, leap, stop.* I would be on the other side.

But I didn't move.

*Two steps back, get up a little speed, leap, leap, leap, stop.*

Instead of action, I felt fear. A stark reminder that although I feel great, I am not young. As I've aged, fear pops up in the darndest places and times. You do not want to be afraid when leaping. If you are, if you think instead of leap, you'll go short. You'll trip. You'll fall.

So I stood there, motionless for two full minutes, purging my mind using the only trick that still works: I imagined children's lives depended on me getting across that creek.

*Leap, leap, side-leap, leap...* and I was over. A little mud, a small climb, and I was back on the trail.

At 18, running along the rock sea wall at the Naval Academy, I could leap for miles nonstop—careful, but never fearful of falling. It's not the same now. The mind isn't always sure you can make the leap, even when you can. Doubt becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

At 61, it is possible to live very much the life you lived when you were young. But the rules are different. We must approach things differently. We must build trust within to counter the inner narrative of disability.

It's not a simple thing to do. But it is possible.

## The Fear Compass

Three months earlier, I had a major crisis of confidence. It started with a crash, and a question. Unbidden, as I sat on a sofa in Puerto Rico, the turquoise expanse of Condado Beach stretching to the horizon, I asked myself, “Why *was* I jumping over those fucking concrete benches on a Tuesday afternoon?”

The view to the sea was spectacular. But a turn of the head revealed my building’s scars—the pock-marked concrete and rusting iron bones of rebar, never repaired after Hurricane Maria. They framed my fifth-floor balcony. For the next few weeks, I would be engaged in an inner dialogue, a silent confrontation about my entire philosophy of health. That jump, and its painful consequence, had become the central case study, as I sat each day rolling cold Medalla beer cans on bruises.

My inner critic was relentless. “Why?” “Because the path was clear.” “*Clear?* There were concrete benches in the way.” “Clear, meaning it led straight to the beach. Going around would have meant delay.” “And scaling concrete doesn’t slow you down?” “It wouldn’t. Because I could.” “You fell. You nearly cracked your skull. Your belief that you ‘could’ is now

in question.” “I differ. I’ve made that jump before. I definitely *could*. I just *didn’t* this time. And now, with something possibly broken... I can’t. For the moment.”

#

This internal debate led me to a deeper, more unsettling question: **Might a philosophy of health be flawed if it is rooted in fear?**

For me, these fears are not abstract. My mother battled three cancers and an aneurysm, yet she was ultimately taken by an antibiotic-resistant infection from a hospital biopsy. The message was perverse: the very system meant to heal her introduced a new, more efficient killer. My father and brother were lost to the slow, relentless progression of cancer, diabetes, and heart disease—ailments of modern living and genetics.

I have watched my family navigate a healthcare system that is brilliant at acute, high-cost intervention but often fails at the simple, profound work of prevention. The pattern is unmistakable. In the wake of each loss, my research always uncovered the same quiet truth: for a vast range of conditions, the outcomes from consistent, fundamental diet and exercise are the same as, or better than, the outcomes from the most advanced surgical or pharmaceutical treatments.

But no one makes billions of dollars from leafy greens and a daily walk. So, these studies are buried, while the seductive pull of consumer society leads us astray. We are delivered endless “solutions” on screens and in trucks, until we risk being buried alive by the very salvation we sought.

And yet, I have benefitted from the most advanced robotic surgery in the world. The **seduction** is real, if short-lived. Immediately after a perfect, double-hernia operation, I was

pressured to take opiates—drugs once reserved for the terminally ill, which now addict millions and kill hundreds of thousands each year. I had to physically block my face until the persistent nurse gave up.

I know the system offers things I might need to save a life. But I also know that true health is in the maintenance of self—the daily work of avoiding the paths that necessitate such high-tech interventions.

My fear is of making the wrong choice. I have come to know you can't trust the system to solve every problem. We must do the major part of healing ourselves. We must make informed decisions about when to use the system's powerful tools, and when to rely on the simple diet, exercise, and natural recovery techniques that all creatures have used for eternity. For us, the path to answers is not always clear; sometimes, it feels purposely blocked.

The barriers to true health can feel like a daunting list:

- Diets rich in processed foods but lacking in real nutrients.
- Sedentary lives, anchored to screens and sofas.
- Chronic sleep deprivation, disrupting our natural cycles.
- The atrophy of functional strength and aerobic capacity.
- A gut microbiome under constant assault.
- The isolation that replaces genuine, person-to-person social engagement.

Daunting, yes. But complex? I argue it is not. The solution is not found in a new purchase, but in a return to essential principles: a diet of 'just enough' proteins, leafy vegetables, grains, nuts, and fruits. Movement that requires little more than our bodies and gravity. Engaging mentally and socially in purposeful activity each day.



This is the path I have engineered for myself. It is a conscious design to navigate the inner risks of genetics and the external traps of a consumptive culture. It led me to downsize my life, to explore Buddhist mindfulness, to reset my perspective in the stark beauty of the desert. It is a commitment to **OG Parkour**—not just the literal leaping over obstacles, but the daily practice of navigating the modern world with purpose and vitality.

OG Parkour is the understanding that real, consistent work is required to keep the barriers at bay. To sustain a healthy life, one must pursue becoming more than just *not sick*. It is the recognition that for an ‘Original Guardian’ of one’s own life, the risks of an outrageous objective—of leaping, both literally and metaphorically—are far less than the certain decline of sitting on a soft sofa until the end of one’s days.

Fear found me, but I have learned to meet it not as a master, but as a compass. It points toward the work that matters. This is the map I have drawn from that orientation. This is the path.

## What is Parkour?

### *Reclaiming Movement, Reclaiming Ourselves*

This book is both a journal of recovery and an argument for a different kind of health—one found not in a doctor’s office or a gym membership, but in the rediscovery of our own bodies. To frame that journey, I find no concept more powerful than parkour.

A pervasive myth defines health in the modern West: that it can be achieved passively, through the right supplement or the right video played from the sofa. That idea is so seductive that without a powerful counter-narrative—a story like parkour—we risk forgetting what true vitality feels like.

I’ve been hounded by this myth since my thirties, chasing quick fixes for the pains and weight gain that came with aging and family life: diets, supplements, gym memberships. Even now, having reclaimed many of the dynamic movements and supplement-free habits of my youth, I still hear the siren call: There must be an easier way.

Parkour might seem like an extreme sport for the young. But its deepest philosophy is a quiet guide for a lifetime. I’ve never performed as a *traceur* in public, but for me, parkour is a

daily practice of reconnection. It's the mechanism I use to describe my own path to well-being, a path that has nothing to do with a TV remote and everything to do with reclaiming our birthright of natural movement.

### **Conceptual Parkour: A Four-Part Map**

To understand parkour as covered in this book, hold **four distinct definitions** in your mind. They are not just history; they are layers of a practice accessible to us all.

#### **The First Slot: Primal Movement**

This is the original parkour—the *OG* human movement that flowed for millennia before it had a name. It is simply how we move when we are part of the world, not just observers of it.

For eons, flavors of humans moved *with* nature. We were participants in a grand symphony, our paths woven into the trails of other creatures in nature, our lives interdependent with the land. This movement wasn't a "workout"; it was life itself—the grace of the builder, the sure-footedness of the gatherer, the playful agility of the child exploring a stream.

This is how I first discovered movement. As a thin Black boy delivering papers in pre-dawn Plainfield, New Jersey, I had one hour to finish before school. There was no time for a slow, door-to-door drive. So I learned to *flow*. I used the car only on main roads. The rest was a silent dash through neighborhood forests, leaping bushes and fences as if they were natural features of the landscape. Drive, dash, repeat. It wasn't a sport; it was a practical, joyful dialogue with my environment.

#### **The Second Slot: Colonial Appropriation**

The second layer is the co-opting of this natural movement by colonial powers. When European militaries encountered indigenous peoples who moved with an effortless efficiency