

Stone Gardens



BRINGING THE GREAT OUTDOORS IN

Seattleites are known as an active bunch, so there are plenty of ways here to experience nature or get a fun workout at a comfortable temperature even when the weather outside is a little chillier.

The **Seattle Bouldering Project** (900 Poplar Pl S; seattleboulderingproject.com) on Beacon Hill offers two floors of bouldering walls—the kind of climbing you do without a rope. Afterward, you can wind down with a drink and a bite at on-site **West Wall Bar** (900 Poplar Pl S; westwallbar.com). **Stone Gardens** (2839 NW Market St; stonegardens.com) in Ballard offers a little more variety with both bouldering and top-rope climbing. South Lake Union's flagship **REI** (222 Yale Ave N; rei.com) retail store also has fun climbing opportunities, as well as a 0.1-mile loop trail for testing out a variety of mountain bikes.

Few boating options are as accessible or affordable as **Washington State Ferries** (wsdot.wa.gov). The many terminals and destinations include pier 52's ferries headed to Bainbridge Island, 35 minutes away. Huddle up with a hot drink from the robust galley offerings and watch Puget Sound go by from indoor booth seating or semi-covered benches.

Love colorful tidepools at the beach? The **Seattle Aquarium's** (★1483 Alaskan Way; seattleaquarium.org) Life on the Edge exhibit is like a year-round version, as you can interact with urchins and other sea creatures inside. The aquarium's various animal habitats, like the otter pool viewable from both below and above the water's surface, blend seamlessly into the outdoors. To continue connecting with fascinating creatures, hold out your hand and let a butterfly alight at **Pacific Science Center's** (★200 Second Ave N; pacificsciencecenter.org) Tropical Butterfly House, a rejuvenating experience.

—Sarah Anne Lloyd

Year-Round Trails

Pacific Northwest hikers never hibernate, but there are some trails especially suited to the off-peak months. Find recent trail reports at wta.org and check wsdot.com for the most up-to-date information on road conditions.

DISCOVERY PARK LOOP TRAIL

2.8 miles—Easy It's a little hard to believe you're still in the heart of the city when you wander the gentle trails of Magnolia's Discovery Park, given that its 534 acres include forested canyons, sandy bluffs, and panoramic views of Puget Sound—not exactly your typical urban fare. Keep your eyes and ears peeled for the more than 270 species of birds that live here, including pileated woodpeckers, bald eagles, and great horned owls.

RATTLESNAKE LEDGE

4 miles—Intermediate

One of the Issaquah Alps' most popular trails is less crowded in the off-season, and there's a misty, ethereal quality to the forested landscape this time of year. At the ledge, clear skies will provide views of Rattlesnake Lake, Mount Si, and Mount Washington. If you're feeling extra adventurous, East Peak is an additional 2.4 miles, with its own stunning views. No matter how far you plan to go, consider bringing traction, as the trail can get slick.

FRANKLIN FALLS

2 miles—Easy You might feel like you've stepped into a scene from *Frozen* as you make your way along this wintery wonderland in the Snoqualmie region, the pathway flanked by snow-topped trees and boulders with a dusting of white. The big payoff comes once you're in sight of Franklin Falls, where the spray creates mesmerizing ice displays. —Haley Shapley



Discovery Park Loop Trail