

Take an Epic Hike on the Olympic Coast

Washington TRAILS

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By Cassandra Overby

HIT THE STAIRS

Seattle Stairway Walks gives hikers a fun way to stay in shape during the off-season with urban hikes that include grassroots art, picturesque views and—you guessed it—plenty of stairs.

Exercising in the off-season can take a lot of discipline. After all, treadmills and exercise bikes don't reward intense physical exertion with expansive vistas, wildflower meadows or alpine lakes. For Puget Sounders or Seattle visitors, authors Jake and Cathy Jaramillo offer a better way to stay in shape with *Seattle Stairway Walks* from Mountaineers Books. This recent title is crammed full of neighborhood hikes that take advantage of Seattle's typical topography—hills, bluffs, canyons and water—and provide just the right mix of exercise, recreation and exploration.

Small enough to slip into your jacket pocket, *Seattle Stairway Walks* features 25 hikes around the city, so it's easy to just grab and go. Each entry contains information on where to start the walk, as well as handy maps that show your entire route with turn-by-turn directions. For the tech-savvy, there are even QR codes that link to digital directions to navigate via smartphone. Each entry also lists hiking distance, walking time, steps up and down and whether or not the route is kid-friendly.

We love that the hikes featured in *Seattle Stairway Walks* can be adapted to fit your age, fitness level and personal interest. If you're new to stair hiking, or just starting a fitness regimen, try Solstice Park in West Seattle (Fauntleroy Way SW and SW Webster Street). For a high-intensity outing, go for Capitol Hill's Blaine Stairs (10th Avenue E and E Blaine Street), where local firefighters work out in full gear—you can achieve the same workout by loading your backpack full of gear and extra weight. The Howe Stairs (10th Ave. E and E Howe St.), with 388 steps, form the longest stairway in Seattle and the fourth longest in the country, and are ideal for building endurance. When you're ready, take it up a notch by running down the stairs and lunging to the top. Increase the number of repetitions as able.

The routes in *Seattle Stairway Walks* aren't all work and no play. Each location has been selected for its local offering of benches, pocket parks and cafes for rest and exploration. Prepare to be charmed with the neighborhood treasures you're sure to find on your own—we spotted several community lending libraries, themed gardens and quirky shops along the way.

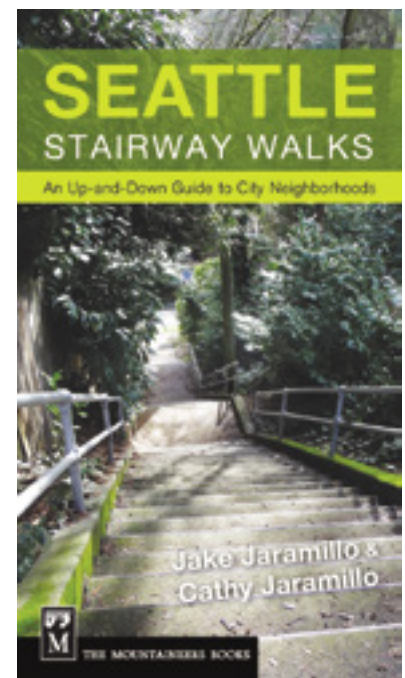
So don't be a winter shut-in. Get out and discover the fun of urban hiking, and spring will be here before you know it. And even if you're not a Seattle resident, there's likely a park or community area near you with some stairs just waiting to be explored. Then everyone can be ready for hiking season—with the muscles and endurance to prove it.

Recommendation:

4/5



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