

A quick guide to using Burnham's Outdoor Gym

Have you discovered Burnham's Outdoor Gym yet? It's situated in Burnham Park next to the library, and it's FREE and available for everyone to use. Officially opened on November 24th 2010 by Dr Bev Daily, then Chairman of Trustees of Burnham Health Promotion Trust and Lin Hazell, then Chairman of Burnham Parish Council, the Gym has been provided for the benefit of the whole community through the generosity of the Freedman Settlement.

The equipment was supplied by the Great Outdoor Gym Company who have installed many similar gyms across the UK and all their equipment has been rigorously tested and has passed the European safety standards for both play areas (EN1176) and gyms (EN957). All the equipment is designed so that the effort is proportionate to the user's body weight.

On Tuesday each week between 11.30am and 12.30pm a personal trainer from PT- ME (www.pt-me.co.uk) is in attendance to show people how to use the equipment safely and effectively. These sessions are FREE and open to everyone. They have proved very popular helping people to gain confidence in using the equipment in a relaxed and sociable environment.

We realise that many people who would like to use the Gym are unable to attend these sessions so we asked Aaron from PT-ME to help us explain more about the equipment and how to get the best out of your exercise programme.....

"The benefit of the Gym's location in Burnham Park is that it's one kilometre around the perimeter of the Park so a brisk walk around the Park is a great start to get your heart pumping and your muscles warmed up. A good approach to your exercise programme is to keep it varied. Start off with any piece of equipment and exercise on it for one minute. After one minute move onto another piece of equipment and repeat until you have experienced every piece of kit....If you've got time it's good to incorporate a second lap of the Park into your exercise programme before finishing off with some stretching exercises. Always take things at a pace that is comfortable for you and do make sure you always warm up first. And last but not least, don't forget your bottle of water – it's important not to get dehydrated."

Remember before you start any new exercise regime, you should consult your doctor. Whilst there are many benefits from exercise, some forms of exercise can exacerbate certain medical problems so do seek advice about the best type of exercise for you. If at any point when exercising you feel dizzy or otherwise unwell, stop, and make sure you arrange to see your doctor as soon as possible.

We hope the following information will be helpful for people who may not be familiar with the various pieces of equipment in the Gym.

The Cross Trainer - Low impact resistance to give an excellent cardiovascular workout which improves muscle stamina and heart and lung function.

- Stand on the foot plate positions
- Hold the handles
- Gently move the handles and foot plates in a forward and backward swinging motion to reach and then maintain a smooth and steady exercise rhythm

Tips - The faster you go the harder it gets. Keep your stomach firm throughout the exercise. Keep your joints "soft" – do not fully straighten arms and legs.



The Fitness Bike – provides a cardiovascular workout to improve heart and lung function and improve general levels of fitness.

- Use the static handle to help you get on the bike. Hold the handles. Sit on the saddle and pedal with a smooth and steady rhythm whilst also moving your arms.

Tip - Keep your stomach firm throughout the exercise



The Arm Bike – provides a cardiovascular workout for those with lower body issues that make the cross trainer or fitness bike harder to use.

The arm bike gives you comfortable seating while you effectively pedal with your arms. Wheelchair users can use this machine whilst sitting in their wheelchairs.



The Leg Press – this is a resistance machine that works the legs to improve muscle tone.

- Sit on the seat facing the equipment. Put your feet on the pedals. Push away from the pedals to straighten your legs.
- At end return smoothly to the original position and repeat.

Tips - Keep your joints “soft” – do not fully straighten arms and legs. Support your back on the seat and try to use your stomach muscles during this exercise.



The Lateral Pull Down – a resistance machine that Improves muscle tone of the back and arms

- Sit with your back to the equipment, stretch arms straight up.
- Hold the handles and pull them down to the level of your chin.
- Return smoothly to the original position and repeat.

Tips - Keep your stomach firm throughout the exercise. Keep your joints “soft” – do not fully straighten arms and legs.

The Chest Press – a resistance machine that improves muscle tone of arms, triceps and chest.

- Sit with your back to the equipment. Choose a comfortable position to hold the handles with both hands.
- Push the handles out in front of you at the same time.
- At end return smoothly to the original position and repeat.

Tips - Keep your stomach firm throughout the exercise. Keep your joints “soft” – do not fully straighten arms and legs.

NB Most people find this the hardest machine, so as an alternative you may prefer to use this piece of equipment to do a standing press up (see below).



Standing Press up

- Stand and face the Chest press
- Place your hands on the handles and keeping your legs straight, bend the arms so you lean towards the machine.
- Straighten your arms to push away from the machine.



In addition to this equipment there are several pieces of static gym equipment, including steps to strengthen the legs, parallel bars, monkey bars and chin up bars to develop upper body strength and sit up bars to develop core strength.

These pieces of equipment can give a very strong workout so do build up gradually and always be guided by your body as to what feels comfortable.

Take particular care if you have any history of back trouble, especially if using the sit up bars.

And finally there is the Kidabout, a roundabout specially designed so that wheelchairs and buggies can be pushed straight onto it. But of course that doesn't stop everyone else enjoying it too!



Dr Bev Daily enjoys the Kidabout!