

Now that Washington is all aflutter with the new administration, this year will bring about a million tourists to visit the Capital city, including the usual grey-haired crowd. Many will ride around in taxis and tourist buses, but this ancient mariner prefers to do the beautiful town on foot. I've been a jogging fanatic for decades. Now long retired, I still trot the paths of a nearby golf course daily. Because I live in Arizona, I no longer have to deal with winter snow, slush and ice, but to escape the 100+ degree desert heat, my jogging is from 5 to 7 am.



I visited Washington many times in my Navy days, and later, when active in producing business conferences throughout the US, I was there almost every month. These retirement days it is only once or twice a year, and I still seek out the best jogging routes for my daily dawn routine. I try for areas that don't require crossing busy streets, because bored commuter drivers in Washington love to play a chicken game of scaring the wits out of innocent joggers, especially slower-moving grey-haired ones.

However, as bad as dodging cars is, all Washington dogs consider joggers fair game. There are dogs everywhere at that early hour, and it seems the most dangerous are the leashed packs being exercised by professional dog walkers. I assume the owners are too busy, too important or just too lazy, so they pay \$25 or so an hour for someone else to do the job.

When the walkers leash a pack of little dogs, they can control even the most yappy and snarly. However, when the pack is five or six big animals, the sight of a jogger will make the most vicious Pit Bull or German Shepherd break free of the leash, and I have the scars on my legs and gluteus maximi to prove it.

So, where are the best places to jog in Washington? The answer is just about anywhere that's away from busy street crossings and biting dogs. For instance, start at the National Mall, where you can run the two miles around the perimeter from the Capitol steps to the Lincoln Memorial. Or venture into the Reflecting Pool area where there are always interesting events, such as political rallies, exercise classes, jogging generals and politicians, and Fourth of July firecrackers.

You can jog past Dupont Circle and up Embassy Row from Massachusetts Avenue, observing the stately lines of elegant buildings and imagine all the political intrigue and posh social events you'll never get to see. If you happen to jog around the Capital Hill area on a Saturday or Sunday, you may see the outdoor flea marketers selling fresh veggies, baked goods and old family heirlooms.

For other jogging recommendations, click on the National Park Service's [nps.gov](https://www.nps.gov) for information about availability of park jogging venues. If your plans include jogging in Washington during the month of March, be sure to contact the Park Service about escorted jog routes and lectures during the city's great Cherry Blossom Festival.

For those who prefer the rural run, NPS's Rock Creek Park, P Street and Woodley, may be the best in town. There are tree-lined dirt jogging and biking paths on a large two-mile loop around and through the public park grounds. Of course, there are many, many more areas for joggers in the city and suburbs, including trails along both the Washington and Virginia sides of the Potomac River. NPS can provide extensive information on them.

Some words of advice about jogging in Washington, other than dodging cars on streets and big dogs off leashes. For safety's sake, take at least one jogging buddy along. Carry a fully-charged cell phone, and sorry to say, some parts of Washington are not too safe after dark, especially in unlighted areas. Do all your jogging from almost dawn to nightfall.