

## FIT TO TRAVEL

nique work, and four-to-eight-minute rounds with a partner. "In some ways it makes you feel like a child again as you roll around on the mat," Oh says.

### Fight the Good Fight

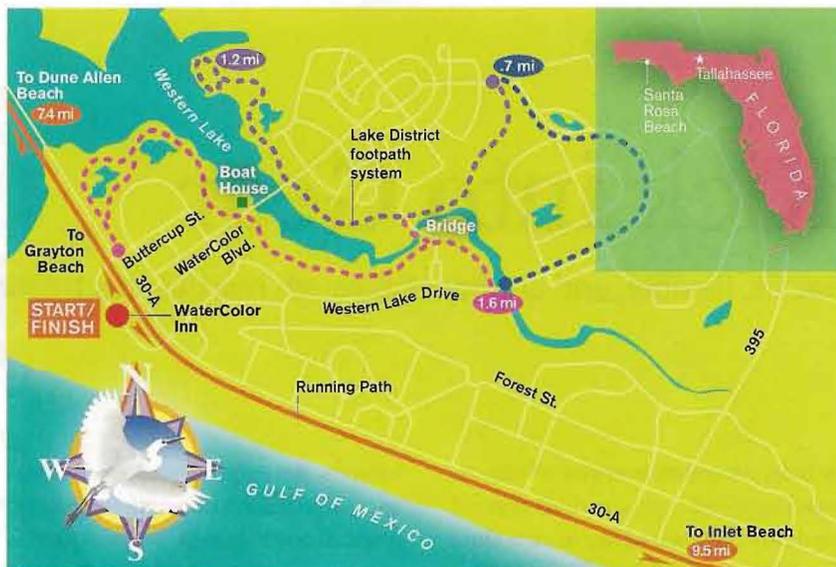
Typically, gyms offer fused options that combine martial arts with dance moves in classes called cardio kick, Kwando, or fusion. At a fitness club, there should be more of a focus on keeping you moving throughout the whole class, which ups the calorie expenditure. Joining a class at a martial arts studio will still provide an excellent workout, plus you may take away some self-defense skills.

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But Chris Pizzo, CEO of Close Combat Company, a Ramsey, N.J., business that provides self-defense home study courses, says that fitness, adventure, and challenge are the real reasons to take up martial arts. Pizzo, who holds black belts in five styles and is working on two others, makes a statement that he says drives most instructors crazy: "Martial arts are a method of self-perfection, but they're not a method of self-protection."

Pizzo feels that learning a martial art is a lifelong endeavor, in which you get in great physical shape and study a different culture. "It's really not about learning to fight someone because you're learning controlled combat; it's really about learning to conquer yourself — your own fears and insecurities — and boost your confidence over a lifetime of work."

*Jennifer Nelson is a freelance writer based near Jacksonville.*



## Playful Paths

Reawaken your inner child with a run along Santa Rosa Beach's hidden footpaths

WHEN YOU'RE AWAY FROM HOME and your normal running route, it's tempting to hit the hotel treadmill. But that would be a mistake if you're near Santa Rosa Beach, about a 30-minute drive from **Fort Walton Beach**, on Florida's panhandle. It's not the beachfront that's the draw here, but rather an intricate system of footpaths that wind in and around pine forests, sand dunes, striking vacation properties, and even a rare coastal dune lake.

Located on Santa Rosa Beach is WaterColor, a 499-acre resort and residential community whose developers created three miles of scenic, half-hidden paths that are perfect for running: they're fairly flat, have a packed-pea-gravel composition that's easy on the joints, and are largely shaded beneath magnolia, oak, and sand pine trees. The footpaths' meandering routes also afford intimate views of WaterColor's picturesque homes and gardens, not to mention the lake.

Begin your run at the corner of Buttercup Street and Highway 30-A, at the west end of the park district. There you'll see the start of a footpath tucked in between the homes and the road. When the path splits, you can go either way, as it reconnects shortly. When it splits again, head toward the Boat House parking lot on Western Lake. Cross the lot, and the path resumes. If you continue on the path until it ends at Western Lake Drive, you'll have run about 1.6 miles.

From here, you can run a short way back on the path until you see a bridge on your right. That will lead you to the middle of the more extensive Lake District footpath system. Or you can hop onto Western Lake Drive and follow it as it curves in a huge U, eventually leading to the start of the main Lake District footpath (just before Blue Jack Street). This path is about 1.2 miles long, although there are numerous offshoots where you can add miles if you wish.

If an out-and-back course is more your style, then head west from the WaterColor Inn along the flat, blacktopped path fronting Highway 30-A. The path stretches 18 miles, past Dune Allen Beach to Inlet Beach. Run as long as you like, then turn around and head back toward WaterColor, making sure to duck into Grayton Beach State Park, less than a mile from the WaterColor Inn. With its white, sandy beaches and rolling sand dunes smothered with golden sea oats, Grayton Beach is considered one of Florida's finest state parks. There are four more miles of trails to try here, but you may wish to simply take a break and enjoy the ocean view. By this point, you deserve it. — *Melanie Radzicki McManus*

**Getting There:** Continental offers daily nonstop service to Fort Walton Beach from its hub in Houston and from Tampa.