

Mountainside Park (Pequannock, NJ) Loop

Length: 3.7 miles **Difficulty:** Moderate to Strenuous **Time:** 2.5 hours

Directions to trailhead

Take I-287 South to Exit 52 (Riverdale/Wayne/Butler) and bear left at the fork to continue on NJ 23 South. In 0.7 mile, turn right onto County Alt. 511, then immediately turn right again onto West Parkway. In 0.8 mile, turn right onto Mountain Avenue, and continue for 1.0 mile (passing under I-287) to a dead-end at the parking area for Mountainside Park.

Hike Description

With the park situated right next to I-287, traffic noise is inevitable but it won't follow along throughout the entire hike. Take the blue-blazed trail up the steps in front of the kiosk at the far end of the parking lot. Elevation gain will start to subdue the roar of cars and trucks below. Turn left on the orange-blazed trail .65 mile into the hike to deaden the traffic sound a little more. The blue trail joins back in before crossing a bridge at a Boy Scout shelter. Stay on blue after the bridge when the orange trail leaves to the right.

Stay on the blue trail which will lead to your destination, the mountain straight ahead, which can be seen when there is no foliage. The ascent becomes steep, just short of a rock scramble, so expect an effort to reach the views. At the top, 1.4 miles into the hike, the traffic noise is long gone and benches invite a break from the climb up. To the left the New York City skyline can be seen on the horizon and a bench on the other side of the kiosk to the right overlooks the mountains of northern New Jersey.

Leave the mountaintop via the yellow-blazed trail that begins near the kiosk. This trail descends somewhat more gradually than the steep ascent of the blue-blazed trail.

Cross over the orange-blazed trail again (woods road), then shortly thereafter stay on yellow/orange when the orange trail joins in from the right. Stay on orange when yellow leaves to the left and is joined by red coming in from the left a few steps ahead. You will come out to a wide grassy woods road, following the combined orange/red trail to where it splits at a bench. Turn left before the bench to proceed on the red-blazed trail. This trail will ascend but not as steeply as the blue-blazed trail. You will catch a break every so often with a flat stretch before the trail ascends again until it reaches the top and follows along a ridge.

At another bench, turn left on orange where orange merges with red to the right. The orange-blazed trail leads down between massive rock formations into a pleasant wooded valley. Traffic noises queue the nearing of the end of the hike as the orange trail joins back up with the red-blazed trail, now a woods road running parallel to a creek. Turn left here and follow the orange/red-blazed woods road to a kiosk then a metal gate beyond which lie I-287 and the parking lot.

NOTE: The Director of Pequannock Parks and Recreation has confirmed that leashed dogs are permitted and the signs in the parking lot are to be corrected if they still show that dogs are not allowed.

[Click here for more pictures of this hike.](#)