



Recreation Redesigned

Unleashing Potential with Playful Surfaces

SurfaceMax[™]
Playground and Recreational Surfacing

MORE THAN JUST SAFETY

In recent years, surfacing has grown as a popular option in many creative ways. Some uses include alternatives for natural ground coverings to reduce maintenance, to adding educational value, and as a creative medium to offer design opportunities in an assortment of additional settings.

There are a variety of surface options available. To learn more about the overall applications of surfacing, refer to PlayCore's guidebook "Strong Foundations: Planning, Purchasing, and Protecting Surfacing Investments" to discover options, budgetary requirements, usage guidelines, and compliance details. Here, we will focus on the many ways to use surfacing to promote overall health and wellness through fitness initiatives, intergenerational play, and creative discovery through surface design. We will concentrate on three unitary options-poured rubber, tiles, and turf. Unitary surfacing provides a smooth surface that requires low maintenance over its life. It is considered by most to be the best option for users with mobility devices.

Synthetic turf provides a grass-like surface that can be inlaid and "striped" to offer color contrast. Unlike natural grass, which needs regular mowing, watering, fertilizing, and pest control, artificial turf requires little upkeep. It stays consistently green and eliminates the need for watering and significantly reduces costs and time spent on maintenance activities. It maintains its "playability" in all weather conditions.

All of these options are ASTM, CPSC and ADA compliant, provide durable critical fall protection when needed for play and recreation areas, and are ideal for walking tracks and fitness trails.



It's an exciting time in the play and recreation industry because surfacing products are evolving beyond their original fall attenuating properties to add play value! We are helping our customers with smart new ways to create engaging, fun, and imaginative surfacing designs. Explore many of the new opportunities to add play value to your project while providing necessary impact attenuation for your users.

Looping Tracks



Looping tracks are a great way to integrate cardio opportunities into a play area or school yard. As an added feature, distances can be designed into the surface so children and families can mark their distance traveled on progressive days and map progress over time. Programming can include race games, agility drills, walking or jogging, and bicycle paths (if outside a playground use zone.) This modality comfortably accommodates children with mobility devices so that everyone feels included. If space allows, dashed lines can be provided in the center of the track to indicate directional travel. Looping tracks can be created with all unitary surfaces, but may require design modifications to accommodate the surface type (ie square edges for tiles.)

Playground Games

When surfacing is being used for a playground, why not incorporate other games in the surface to expand the playability? Hopscotch, target jumping/throwing, alphabet/spelling games, and other fun opportunities can be added, giving the playground a new connection to learning and exercise. For instance, design the alphabet into the surface to surround the outer edge of the play area, then challenge children to spell words by running to each consecutive letter.

Foursquare is another game that can be embedded in surfacing, and the squares can be used in a variety of other activities, as well. For example, position a person in each square so they are all facing the center and have each toss a beanbag (for children) or drag a weighted bag (for adults) to the person in the next square. Because of the intricacy of the design, these options are best executed in poured rubber.



Activity and Exercise Tracks

Family-friendly activity and exercise tracks can be incorporated into surfacing to promote movement, coordination, and creativity. Because they are abstract in nature, they are open to interpretation and can be traversed in a number of ways.

Simply put they are a series of visual cues laid out in a winding track that suggest a pattern of movement like hopping, walking, jumping, and crawling designed to improve a range of fitness and motor skills. They can be added to any public site and are especially beneficial in places where sedentary activity is the primary focus. As an example, place them near picnic shelters, bus stops, seating plazas, and rest stops, then watch the active behavior begin. These tracks are especially fun for families as people of various ages will interpret the cues in fun and different ways. Poured rubber would be the best choice, though turf could also be used if color variety throughout the space is not a primary focus.





FITNESS SPACES

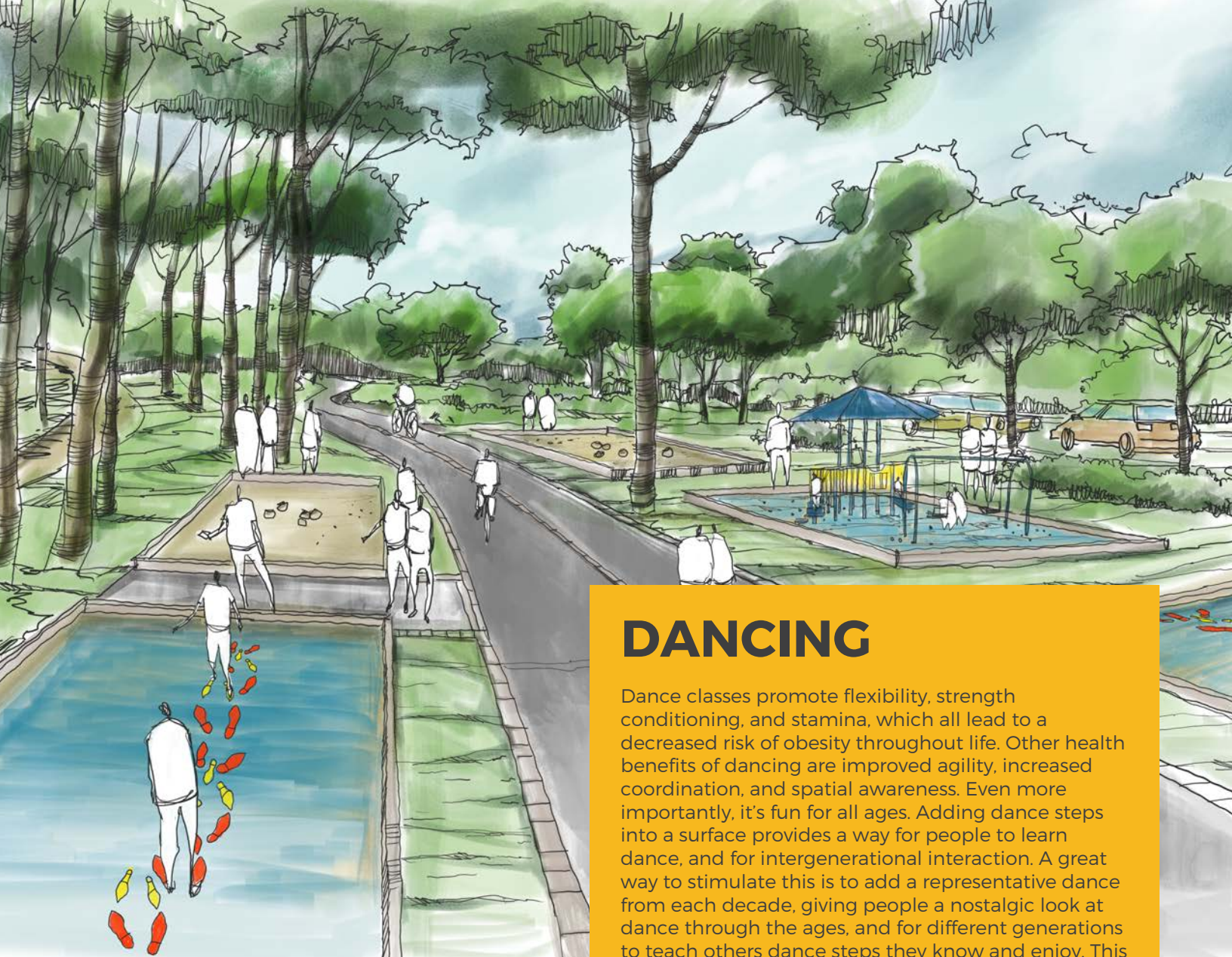
Obstacle Course Enhancements and Additional Exercises

Unitary surfacing is a great surface option for fitness parks and additional activities can be incorporated in the surface to expand usage and increase user capacity (see next section for ideas). Directional cues, team names, and school colors can attract users to outdoor fitness facilities. For obstacle courses, surfacing can serve as directional cues to help users interpret the course. A variety of additional exercises can also be added to the surfacing to promote fitness. Some parks have included a timed 40-yard dash to increase active behavior and intergenerational fun. This is especially useful in heavily used parks, or in the case of outdoor classes where participants may exceed the amount of available equipment. Depending on the intricacy and design requirements, any unitary surface could be used, but as with any design, poured rubber provides the greatest design flexibility.

Add foot/yard markers to poured rubber tiles, or turf in order to encourage measured sprints, long jumps, standing jumps, agility hops, and more exercises where measurement and/or distance is used to mark progress.

Add agility dots, used in football training for foot placement and agility. These simple round markers are a great way to add a variety of exercises. Use them to jump in a variety of patterns; they can even be used in memory games with children to follow the same pattern of dot jumps, adding a new one each time to see how long a pattern they can mimic.

For additional agility options, agility ladders can be designed into the surface. This is particularly useful for those who are beginning their fitness journey, rehabilitating after an injury, or unsure of their balance. While actual agility ladders lay on the surface and may cause an inexperienced user to catch their foot on the ladder, if the agility ladder is designed into and flush with the surface, this challenge is eliminated. Agility markers work best with poured rubber or turf.



Visual Cues

In the world of rubber surfacing design for recreational spaces, visual cues stand as an essential pillar of functional aesthetics. Such cues, often subtly embedded within the surfacing, not only elevate the design's visual appeal but also serve to guide, inform, and ensure the safety of users. From distinguishing specific activity zones to aiding in navigation, to enhancing the accessibility for people with disabilities, visual cues transform simple surfaces into interactive landscapes. As we delve deeper into this section, we will explore two ways in which these design elements can be integrated to create inviting, user-friendly, and efficient recreational spaces.

DANCING

Dance classes promote flexibility, strength conditioning, and stamina, which all lead to a decreased risk of obesity throughout life. Other health benefits of dancing are improved agility, increased coordination, and spatial awareness. Even more importantly, it's fun for all ages. Adding dance steps into a surface provides a way for people to learn dance, and for intergenerational interaction. A great way to stimulate this is to add a representative dance from each decade, giving people a nostalgic look at dance through the ages, and for different generations to teach others dance steps they know and enjoy. This strategy is best implemented with poured rubber.

FITNESS

In addition to actual exercises, surfacing can be utilized to provide visual cues to help users understand specific fitness zones, directional guidelines, wayfinding along trails, or other specified ideas to direct movement. Parks have incorporated this strategy to help users understand the areas within their fitness park using color codes to indicate the space intention. This could be achieved by using differently colored tiles or poured rubber, or by mixing surface types.





Spheres

Spheres are a beautiful design element and can be used in every way that a stability ball can. A few examples of this kind of innovative use, to help make the case for spheres as a fitness element, include:

- Lie on the top facing down and extend arms and legs for balance and core development.
- Sit against it for supported crunches that make sit ups achievable for almost anyone.
- Stand on the top for balance.
- Mimic a flat bench by resting shoulders on top of the ball, with hips even with shoulders and feet firmly planted on the floor for glute bridges.
- Rest feet on the top with body in plank position and hands on ground for advanced planks and push up work.
- Do reverse pike ups from that position by walking hands back toward the ball, hinging at the hip.
- Expand glute strength by lying hips over top of ball, hands on ground, and lifting legs together from ground to a position even with hips.

Having a variety of sphere dimensions provides users of different fitness abilities and heights the opportunity to work with a sphere that best suits their needs. Mounds, spheres, and other shapes can be used independently, or combined with the built environment to create fitness opportunities that promote a wide range of exercises to promote aerobic capacity, muscle fitness, core strength, balance, and flexibility. Poured rubber is the medium of choice for spheres and mounds.

Mounds

Elevated surfacing mounds and molded rubber surfacing spheres are the latest game changers in the realm of recreational surfacing. As architects and designers strive for innovative ways to elevate the play experience, these features offer more than just aesthetic appeal; they promise a trifecta of benefits. First, their unique designs stand out, transforming any recreational space into a visual delight. Second, they enhance play value, enticing children and adults alike to explore, climb, and engage with the environment in new ways. Lastly, beyond mere fun, these formations are champions of health, encouraging fitness and agility exercises that challenge both balance and coordination. For those seeking to elevate recreational spaces, these surfacing elements are worthy considerations.

Surface mounds can be used in many ways: climbing, fitness, and added exploration to name a few. Mounds will provide a stable surface for those wishing to do balance exercises. Mounds can also be used to walk up and down, strengthening overall leg muscles and balance. They can also be utilized in a variety of incline and decline work, taking the place of a weight bench for those who wish to bring moveable equipment to the park. Like spheres, mounds are a great intergenerational fitness component as children will find many creative ways to incorporate them into their play. For parks wishing to hold "mommy (or daddy) and me" exercise classes, they can be a valuable tool in keeping children engaged while their parents use them to work out.

Game Boards

Any game board can be created in surfacing, imagination is the only limitation, but do give thought to signage and other necessary components like spinners or dice. Surfacing can even be combined with equipment to create game boards, imagine the fun of “chutes and ladders” with slides and monkey bars incorporated! For more elaborate game boards, poured rubber would be required to capture the design intricacies.

Labyrinths

A labyrinth is a pattern of pathways that weave around a central point. You walk through the pathways to get to the center. Research conducted at the Harvard Medical School’s Mind/Body Medical Institute by Dr. Herbert Benson has found that focused walking meditations are highly efficient at reducing anxiety and eliciting what Dr. Benson calls the ‘relaxation response’. This effect has significant long-term health benefits, including lower blood pressure and breathing rates, reduced incidents of chronic pain, reduction of insomnia, improved fertility, and many other benefits. Regular meditative practice leads to greater powers of concentration and a sense of control and efficiency in one’s life. Labyrinth walking is among the simplest forms of focused walking meditation, and the demonstrated health benefits have led hundreds of hospitals, health care facilities, and spas to install labyrinths in recent years.



Pathways/Trails

Rubber surfacing offers several advantages for pathways in various settings. It provides a cushioned and non-slip surface, reducing the risk of slips, trips, and falls, with excellent shock absorption, which can be especially important for older adults. Rubber pathways also offer increased accessibility for individuals with assistive devices. The smooth and even surface allows for easy navigation and reduces barriers to movement.

Surfaces for Aging Communities

Attenuating surfaces have emerged as a game-changer in senior living communities, particularly in assisted living and memory care homes, revolutionizing the way we approach resident safety and well-being. These specialized surfaces offer a range of benefits that are crucial for the unique needs of seniors.

First and foremost, attenuating surfaces provide an unparalleled level of impact absorption, significantly reducing the severity of injuries resulting from falls. As falls are a leading cause of harm among older adults, these surfaces help mitigate the risk of fractures, sprains, and other fall-related injuries. This enhanced safety feature promotes confidence and independence

among residents, allowing them to navigate their outdoor living spaces with peace of mind.

Court Renovations

If you have an old unused or damaged court, consider a renovation. Tennis, bocce, basketball, shuffleboard, and pickleball courts can all be updated, renovated, or refurbished to create an exciting new active space. Surfacing design can offer a variety of colorful options that are more attractive and may save budget over asphalt recovery on an established court.

Splash Pad Enhancements

Rubber surfaces offer excellent slip resistance, reducing the risk of accidents and falls, especially when the area is wet. This is crucial in aquatic play spaces where water is constantly flowing, and children are likely to run and play. As mentioned in other applications, it can be customized in terms of color, patterns, and designs, allowing for creative and visually appealing splash pad installations. This flexibility enables the creation of vibrant and engaging play spaces that children find attractive and fun, and can even be used to create directional designs, additional games, or themed design to aquatic play parks.

While there are many additional unique ways to use surfacing in recreational spaces, these ideas are designed to stimulate imagination and open discussions within the community. Be sure to hold community meetings to understand the range of users, and how they might like to use the space. With surfacing, anything is possible!



SurfaceMax Surfacing

544 Chestnut St. Chattanooga, TN 37311

800-727-1907



www.surfacemax.com

