Our Favorite Easy Hikes
Live By Living connects cancer survivors and caregivers with nature and one another. Our walks, hikes, snowshoe outings, and retreats are structured to help you build up your strength and stamina at your own pace, find solace in the beauty of nature, and to inspire, and be inspired by, others who are traveling along the cancer journey.

One of the ways we help survivors and caregivers connect with nature, and connect with others on the cancer journey, is through easy hikes and walks. In Spring through Fall we hike in the foothills, and even higher up, weather permitting. In the Winter, we walk in parks and open space in and near the Denver metro area.

Walking is great exercise and combining that with the beauty of nature, and the companionship of others on the cancer journey is wonderful for the body and the spirit. Our hikes and walks are generally easy, not more than about 3 miles or so, without too much elevation to climb. We have fun, enjoy nature, and love the camaraderie of our companions.

To help you get out to enjoy nature, and get some exercise, we’ve compiled this collection of our favorite easy hikes. Inside, for each hike, you will find the address/directions to the trailhead, the Google Plus Code to help get you there, map of how to get to the trailhead, map of the route, statistics showing the distance and elevation gain, and a description of the hikes. Oh yes, if there is a restroom there!
Bluff Lake Nature Center is a beautiful hike for Spring, Fall and Winter. There is a nice, wide, dirt trail that circles the lake, providing access to two observation platforms on the lake where you can view the waterfowl, insect life among the cattails, and enjoy a view of the lake and mountains.

The trail starts from the nature center and offers two routes down to the lake - steps or a ramp, both dirt. There is only 126’ of elevation gain.

You can easily walk the lake trail in about an hour with limited stops or enjoy a leisurely walk over two hours, stopping at the platforms to enjoy the lakes, observing the bird life, and educational sites.
Burning Bear is a relatively flat trail following Geneva Creek. Beautiful views of Guanella Pass, the Geneva Creek valley, and the creek.

Park at the Abyss Lake parking just across the road. The road is usually plowed in the winter so you can snowshoe Burning Bear (and Abyss Lake), too.

There are porta-potties at the Abyss Lake lot and a restroom at Threemile Creek a couple miles south.

In Summer, insect repellant might be good.
Caribou Ranch is a gentle hike with little elevation gain. The main attraction is the DeLonde Ranch, which was used in the movie Stagecoach. It makes for a nice place to stop, snack, then turn around for your return.

In the Fall you are witness to beautiful stands of aspen turning gold. You might see elk, too. For additional mileage you can continue on to the Bluebird Mine Complex.

The open space is closed April 1 to June 30 to protect migratory birds and elk calving and rearing.
This is a beautiful hike on a paved trail that follows Clear Creek west from Golden. The hike is part of the master plan to have an ADA-compliant trail from downtown Golden through Clear Creek.

There are serious stairs from the parking lot down to the trail as well as a gentle ramp.

In Spring and Summer there are grapes, hops, Sweet Peas. You can walk back along the old historic Welch Ditch above the south side of Clear Creek. Watch for a little bit of poison ivy along the ditch, but not in the way.

In Summer, you’ll want to start early to avoid the heat. In Winter, there can be ice from recent snowstorms so bring microspikes.
Flying J Ranch is an easy hike in the woods and meadows of Jefferson County. There is a pretty little stream that flows through it, and you might see deer. Moose could be a possibility, too.

The trail is generally wide, free of rocks and roots, though not completely clear. Most of the elevation is gained in the first ½ mile, climbing up into a open area that may once have been logged or burned. From that point on, you are mostly in the trees.
Roxborough State Park is a beautiful park filled with spectacular red rock formations. The Fountain Valley trail is the primary trail that wanders along the valley floor to historic ranch buildings and through the formations. You may see deer, birds, maybe even a mountain lion or bear if you are insanely lucky.

The park is open during daylight hours. In the winter you can snowshoe this route, snow permitting. There are other, longer and more strenuous trails in the park, too.

The visitor center has some interesting naturalist displays, gifts, and restroom.
This hike follows the paved trail from Giberson Bay west around Dillon Reservoir to the track and baseball diamond for Summit Middle School. There are beautiful views of the lake, and Ten Mile Range, and wildflowers in season. The trail is multi-use so shared by walkers and bicyclists.

Turn left at the first traffic light as you exit I70 going south onto Dillon Dam Rd. The parking is along the Dam Rd. There is an entrance to the Giberson Bay fishing site about 150’ farther on. A fee is required for parking at the fishing site. Restrooms are located at the fishing site.
This short, gentle loop pairs the Degge Trail with the Mesa Reservoir Trail to circumnavigate Mesa Reservoir. It provides great views over Boulder Valley Ranch, the Flatirons and Boulder Reservoir. Hike through dry fields of yucca and prairie grass to view waterfowl and frogs down at the reservoir, which is intermittently filled with rainwater. You may also see prairie dogs, birds of prey and snakes.

The reservoir is mostly dry. Due to the open nature of the trail, Summer is not the best time for this trail unless you do it very early in the day.

The address is for Precon Bridges across the road from the parking.
Mt. Falcon has many trails you can take, creating a hike the distance of your choice. This one takes you to the historic ruins of the Walker Ranch and to the group shelter and picnic tables and overlook.

The trail is wide, rock and root-free. It runs through the main meadow at Mt. Falcon and most of the route is open.

Mt. Falcon is a very popular park so if you are hiking weekends you’ll want to get there early before the parking is taken.
Old Squaw Pass Rd. is a mostly flat to gently sloping old roadbed that is being reclaimed by nature. Generally wide and not too rocky, it follows the contour east to the road to Mestaa’ehche Mountain. Along the way, it’s crossed by the trail to Chief Mountain.

The trail is mostly bordered by conifers but there are some spectacular views of the mountains to the north. In the fall, the views include colorful stands of aspen.

The trail is entirely above 10,000’ so keep that in mind when hiking it.
South Valley Park has dramatic red sandstone spires and stunning views of craggy outcroppings. The trails are well-suited for beginning mountain bikers, and hikers who prefer more level terrain. This park is an on-trail only experience; do not climb on the delicate sandstone formations for your own safety and to protect these highly erosive surfaces. The northwest section of the park is set aside as a Sensitive Area closed to public use to protect nest sites.

After snow or rain the trails may be closed due to mud. As the trail is exposed, Spring and Fall are the best times to hike. In Summer, hike early in the morning. Watch for snakes!
Waterton Canyon is a beautiful hike in the Spring, Fall and Winter. It can get hot in the Summer. The trail is actually the road to Strontia Springs Dam but is restricted to Denver Water vehicles so very low traffic. It is used by bicyclists, runners, and hikers.

The big attraction, besides the South Platte River, is the herd of Bighorn Sheep that live in the canyon and frequently come down to the road. Deer are common near the entrance to the canyon. On very rare occasions you might see a bear.

The road is wide and well maintained. There are restrooms along the trail every few miles as well as shelters with picnic tables.

The road goes to the dam but you can go as far as you desire then turn around at any time.