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Make like a monkey at Monkido

New, unique obstacle course has guests literally swinging from tree to tree

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It's as much psychological as it is physical, and you'll likely learn something about yourself and the people you go with.

The Monkido elevated obstacle course at WildPlay Whistler is a new and unique activity in the resort. It's both fun and challenging, and a great way to bond with family, loved ones, friends or coworkers.

For adults, it harkens back to the childhood days of climbing trees and pushing physical and comfort-level limits the way only kids seem to do. For kids, it's a chance to take all that tree-climbing energy and risk taking to the next level.

Safety is of course paramount at Monkido, with continuous attachment to safety cables via harness throughout the course. Despite the fact that you're not in physical danger, even some of the ladders up to the platforms in the trees can make your palms start to sweat.

The full Monkido course, designed for adults with accompanying height and skills restrictions for kids, includes four circuits of "games" or "elements" up in the trees at Cougar Mountain. Beginning at the green course and progressing through blue, red and black, each circuit gets progressively higher up in the trees and activities become more challenging.

In the green course, you'll encounter a fairly stable bridge made of wooden boards spaced an easy distance from each other. Once you get into the blue and red levels, a similar bridge becomes more wobbly and the boards are spaced much wider — too wide for a single step in some cases.

While the level of difficulty steadily increases, so too do your confidence and sense of adventure. Competitive streaks begin to show themselves, and family and loved ones egg each other on and offer encouragement.

Elements of the Monkido course include zip lines, suspended bridges, swinging logs, rope swings, hanging nets and other surprises. The tree platforms themselves can be a thrill for those who get nervous with heights — the more challenging areas of the course take you 60 feet up in the trees. Again, safety harnesses are in place all the way, but you won't find any railings on the tree platforms.

Whether hugging a tree trunk while you get up the nerve to take on the next game or racing from one element to the next with fearless confidence, Monkido can be tackled with slow, careful precision or go-for-it gusto. If things start to get too high or challenging, there are several exit points within the course and even a convenient loop that allows participants to bypass the really tough black section.

A kids' course is also offered at Monkido for children as young as seven. And for those who prefer to keep their feet firmly planted on the ground but don't want to miss the rest of the family's feats, there

are convenient walking paths under the whole course for following along, offering encouragement and taking photos. Helpful Monkido guides watch from the paths below while you figure out strategies to tackle the feats of balance and bravery.

A sense of accomplishment and lasting memories are the reward when you unclip the safety harness from the final zip line.

Monkido is one of two WildPlay tours offered in the forest at Cougar Mountain, about 10 minutes from Whistler Village. The company also offers Zoom zip line tours, which allow guests to ride side-by-side on dual lines which reach as high as 400 feet above the ground and reach speeds of 100 kilometres an hour.

The full Monkido course costs \$50 and takes about two hours. Visit www.wildplay.com/whistler for more info and booking details.

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