

DISABOOM SUMMER SPORTS GUIDE

Remember how much fun summer used to be?

Drinking root beer floats

Watching clouds

Playing hide and go seek

Flashlight tag in the dark

Going barefoot

It's time to get back to the joy of those days! Peek inside. Your key to sun-drenched discoveries awaits.

More Reading Pleasure

[Accessible Travel](#)

[Adaptive Sports](#)

P2 Adaptive Cycling

P3 Water Sports

P4 Cool Summer Sports

P5 Extreme Adaptive Sports

P6 At Home or Away At Camp

disaboom
live forward



Barbecues, family reunions, lazy days in the shade ... summer's upon us! And that means it's time to switch our athletic endeavors from deep snowy powder and indoor courts to wind-whipped whitecaps and grassy fields.

Did you think summer was only for baseball addicts? No way! There's a huge variety of outdoor sports (including baseball!) that are yours to try, from horseback riding to archery, fishing to kayaking. The whole outdoors is your playground, and all kinds of adaptive sports programs are just waiting for you to try them out.

Whether you're nervous about dipping a toe in the water or anxious to get back to deep-sea diving, there's an adaptive sports organization that can take you where you want to go. Your new best friend might be a 1,200 lb. palomino at a local riding facility, or you might start a lifelong

relationship with your buddy from cycling camp. Opportunities abound to get or keep in shape and do some socializing in the process.

How'd you like to dip your paddle into a lake where the sun's rays make diamonds dance across the surface of the water? Or banish your vertigo by heading up a rocky cliff, suspended only by the taut rope between you and your belay partner? Maybe you'd be thrilled to startle a herd of whitetail deer while you hike farther than you ever thought you could go, or swallow a little saltwater because you're laughing so hard from being pulled on the wakeboard.

"The only disability in life is a bad attitude."

- Scott Hamilton

Whatever you dream of doing, the place to start is right here with your own Summer Sports Guide. Make your plans, rub on the sunscreen, then come out and play!

Cycling Resources

[Adaptive Adventures](#)

[National Ability Center](#)

[Northeast Passage](#)

[One Leg Tim](#)

[Paralympic Cycling](#)

[The Adaptive Sports
Center of Crested Butte](#)

[Tips on bicycle riding for
lower limb amputees](#)

[U.S. Handcycling
Federation](#)

[United States Deaf
Cycling Association
\(USDCA\)](#)

[USABA Events Calendar:
Cycling](#)

[Yahoo Groups:
Handcyclists](#)



Adaptive Cycling

Do you miss the thrill of the open road, the wind at your back and pavement rolling endlessly ahead? It's time for you to hop on a bike and experience it all again. Adaptive cycling has come a long way, allowing almost anyone with a disability to get out and ride.

Your first step is to attend a biking clinic where you can try out some of the different bikes available and find out what works best for your particular situation. There are literally hundreds of programs across the country, but one that has been around a long time is Denver-based [Adaptive Adventures](#), which offers programs all over the country.

Handcycling

By far the most popular form of adaptive biking involves handcycles. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes, provide increased stability with two back wheels, and are easy to get in and out of. The power comes from your arms instead of your legs, making them ideal for wheelchair users. And the low sitting position is more comfortable for most people than the higher seat of traditional bikes.

Most handcycles are made for the recreational user, but elite models are available for anyone with a lust for speed. Since the sport's inclusion in the Paralympics, continuous technological advances are guaranteed. Contact the [U.S. Handcycling Federation](#) for general information, as well as their racing schedule.

To connect with others across the country who enjoy the sport of handcycling, and for tips or to find a riding partner, try the [Yahoo! handcycling group](#). And be sure to read up on [how to choose a handcycle](#) before you buy.

Amputee Cycling

Modifying a bicycle for an amputee may be as simple as attaching Velcro to one of the pedals or moving two brakes to one lever. The most important part of learning to ride is getting help from someone who has been there.

For example, you'll learn to place your prosthesis on the pedal back toward the heel instead of on the ball of your foot, and to use a telephone pole as a handy place to stop. Many more tips can be found at [The Amputee Web Site](#).

Tandem Cycling

Throwing a leg over the seat of a tandem bike can bring a sense of joy and anticipation to anyone, but it's especially tantalizing for someone who can't normally travel past walking speed. That's why blind "stokers" on the back pair with a sighted "pilot" in front for great fun and exercise. For more information or to find a partner, contact the [United States Association of Blind Athletes](#).

Wheelchair tandems make biking available to those who can't sit up and provide leg power. With two wheels in front, the passive rider sits in a reclining position in front of the power rider in back. For information about this or any other adaptive bike, contact [BikeAble](#).

Adaptive Mountain Biking

And if you're someone who wants to get off the beaten path, there's a bike for you, too. Get out the fat tires and hit the dirt after brushing up on what you need to know about [mountain biking](#). Not just for vertical terrain, a mountain bike allows you to go off-roading without worrying about dirt and gravel. So what if you bring a little bit of the road back on your shirt? For the more adventuresome, that's half the fun!

Water Sports Resources

[Adaptive Sports Association](#)

[BlazeSports.com](#)

[Blind Sailing International](#)

[Fishing Has No Boundaries](#)

[Grand Rapids Wheelchair Sports Association](#)

[Handicapped Scuba Association International](#)

[International Association for Handicapped Divers](#)

[National Ability Center](#)

[Sailors With Special Needs](#)

[The Adaptive Sports Center of Crested Butte](#)

[USA Swimming - Adapted](#)

[Walkin' Roll Activities League, Inc.](#)



Water Sports

Splash, spray, squirt, swim! When the sun is shining down on you, there's nothing better than taking on some H2O for cool summer fun.

If you're heading out on top of the wet stuff and want to stay (mostly!) dry, remember that polyester dries a lot faster than your cotton T-shirt and jeans. And for those rays getting reflected off the surface of the water? Polarized sunglasses are specifically designed to cut down on glare, and applying extra sunscreen is a lot less painful than dealing with a nasty burn.

If you've got the urge to glide on glassy water or gentle rivers, options abound. How about a canoe ride with a stabilizer bar for added support? [Kayaks offer a solo experience](#) for those willing and able to do some paddling. Those with advanced skills can graduate to natural whitewater or increasingly popular [whitewater parks](#), where obstacles and drops are tailor-made for excitement.

Tubing is another fun way to float ... just make sure your group takes along an extra innertube with a mesh sack in the middle for keeping beverages immersed and cold.

Maybe you'd rather climb into a raft, where the addition of a special portable chair can give upper and lower torso support. Choose from a calm water tour where the biggest excitement may be spotting an eagle soaring overhead, or get a little more adventurous with a run through rapids that spray water in your face and provide more than a little thrill as your inflatable boat dips and surges.

Want to feel the tug of a trout on your line? Check out [Fishing Has No Boundaries](#) for adaptive gear and more, whether you want to angle from a seat on the shoreline or off the back of a boat.

Speaking of boats, how about a little fast-paced action? We're talking [water skiing and wakeboarding](#). You'll need at least one strong arm for these high-

energy tows from the back of a powerboat, but [you don't have to know how to swim in order to water ski](#). Just remember that thumbs up means go faster, thumbs down means "whoa!"

If you like the feel of the wind in your hair, if the only sound you want to hear is your jib sheet filling, then [adaptive sailing](#) is for you. You can be aboard as a passenger, learn how to sail yourself, or join a competitive team.

Want to pet a nurse shark, or watch tropical fish weave through seaweed and coral inches from your face? The [Handicapped Scuba Association](#) can get you started on the underwater adventures you crave. Opportunities for [adaptive scuba diving](#) abound both in the U.S. and worldwide, so go get tanked.

Perhaps you'd rather not share the water with anything more than your own species: a pool is for you! Devoted [lap swimmers can race](#) or shoot for the Paralympics, while others might be content with assisted floating. The buoyancy of the water takes pressure off stressed skin and creates a unique environment for [spinal cord injury](#) alternative movement.

But what if the lack of a decent bathing suit is keeping you from using water for anything but drinking and taking a shower? Looking for a bathing suit that you don't have to fight your way into, one you can put on yourself without help? Or you may need specialized flotation swimwear or other adaptive assistance. Check out [adaptive swim equipment](#) and the [list of adaptive swimwear products](#) to feel confident in and around the water.

Amputees face specific issues when they get prostheses near water and sand. We've got that one covered, too. Find out the latest [in waterproof prosthetic technology, as well as how to cover an existing prosthesis](#) to make it impervious to even beach sand.

Cool Summer Sports Resources

[Adaptive Golf Foundation of America](#)

[Adaptive Sports Association](#)

[American Hippotherapy Association](#)

[BlazeSports](#)

[Challenger Little League](#)

[Children's Golf Foundation](#)

[Colorado Wheelchair Sports](#)

[Fore Hope](#)

[Grand Rapids Wheelchair Sports Association](#)

[National Ability Center](#)

[National Alliance for Accessible Golf](#)

[National Wheelchair Softball Association](#)

[North American Riding for the Handicapped Association](#)

[United States Golf Association Foundation Resource Center for Individuals with Disabilities](#)

Cool Summer Sports

Go Team!

Hey, batta batta. If you enjoy the camaraderie of team sports, summer offers an all-American opportunity: baseball. Join an adult team playing hardball or softball at the competitive (or non-competitive) level you want. There's even an [association for blind baseball](#), or beep ball.

Kids with disabilities of all kinds can play on the [Miracle League](#), where fields are completely accessible. T-ball, where the ball isn't pitched but rests on a stand, is another option.

Tennis, anyone? [A Paralympic sport, wheelchair tennis](#) has boomed in popularity. Release your inner Roger Federer in singles or doubles competition, or get happy just connecting your racquet strings with the ball. (Useful for exercising your retriever.)

Individual Sports

If you can run or roll, the Achilles [Track Club](#) will support you in your athletic endeavor. Their mission is to enable people with all types of disabilities to participate in mainstream athletics, promote personal achievement, enhance self esteem, and lower barriers.

People with [visual impairment can take advantage of a guide runner](#) for serious exercise. These are sighted runners who assist their blind partner with training and racing.

Or how about wheelchair racing, which takes place on a track or as a road race, with distances varying from the 100 m. sprint to the 10,000 m. endurance contest? (But keep in mind, that if you really get hooked, light, responsive, specialized racing chairs can cost thousands ... just for the wheels!)

The Yahoo [Wheelchair Racing Group](#) helps athletes and coaches around the world share racing and training tips, as well as their experiences. Check out a [primer on wheelchair racing](#).

Feeling like you want more of a challenge? You can become one of a small group of wheelchair triathletes who open-water swim, handcycle and wheel their way to the finish line of these demanding races. Distances vary, with sprint triathlons being the shortest (about 1/2 mile swim, 12 mile bike, and 2 1/2 mile run), increasing to Olympic lengths and the



prestigious [Ironman triathlon](#) (first completed with a wheelchair and handcycle in 1994), which takes about 14 hours to finish ... if you can!

Hiking is accessible for everyone, even if you're in a wheelchair. Get out the fat tires for difficult terrain, or stick to flatter paths. Do some bird watching or take in views from a mountain top while the pine-scented breeze ruffles your hair. Quality group experiences are available with many organizations, including [Northeast Passage](#).

Did you ever read Black Beauty growing up, or play cowboys and Indians? Satisfy that repressed urge to ride the range with [equine therapy](#). Centers across the country provide horses, groomers, handlers and side-walkers so anyone can get in a saddle. Animal contact lowers stress, while riding increases balance and back strength.

[Accessible golf](#) makes it possible for almost anyone to enjoy a day on the links, or just at the driving range. [Adaptive golf equipment](#) including specialized carts and clubs, beg you to take up the game or return to a sport you enjoyed in the past. There's even a [program just for veterans](#), who want to hit the tee box.

Extreme Sports Resources

[Extreme Adaptive Sports](#)

Provides stories, rant and rave section, who's who list of mono- and bi-skiers, classifieds, equipment reviews, single skis for sale for qualified buyers, and EAS's and instructor's tips. Also a resource for handcycles, mono-ski camps, adaptive ski and resort programs, and adaptive sport programs.

[Extreme Mike](#)

Jumping out of a plane, hanging over a ravine from a bungee cord: if Mike can do it, so can you!

[Extreme Wheelchair Sports](#)

Check out the tank chair, or watch a couple of crazies try wheelchair jousting ... with cattle prods! Extreme chairing, four cross, and more! The photos, the videos and the resources are all here. Buy a helmet before you try this at home.

[SPLORE](#)

Trip details, costs, events and contacts for this organization that provides rafting, skiing, rock climbing and canoeing opportunities in Utah.



Extreme Adaptive Sports

If you don't like to follow the crowd, if you yearn to do something that's a little (or a lot!) on the edge, then extreme sports are for you. It's more likely you'll get knocked down by a wave or contribute some DNA to a roadway, but the potential for thrills makes every mouthful of saltwater or road rash worth it. Limb loss? There's an [Extremity Games](#) just for you. Or check out [Adaptive Action Sports](#) for support in beginning, continuing, or competing in an extreme sport.

[Indoor rock gyms](#) offer a reasonably safe, weatherproof environment for learning to climb. Rent a harness, chalk bag and shoes for your vertical crawling, which will require a partner if the gym doesn't have an autobelay system or two. Outdoor crag climbing is a sweet alternative, and you've got blind climber [Eric Weihenmayer](#) and paraplegic [Steve Muse](#) for inspiration.

Riding a rail, curving concrete or sneaking out for a dawn race down a hilly road, skateboarding makes you feel like you're flying. And what if you're in a wheelchair? Welcome to [Aaron Fotheringham and Hardcore Sitting](#), my friend. Elbow pads and attitude required.

Surf's up! Paraplegic [Christiaan Bailey](#) hasn't let a spinal cord injury sustained in a skate park keep him out of the waves. You can get started at [The Expedition School](#) in Texas, which offers surf camp for all ages.

Check out Facebook's group for [adaptive skydiving](#) or this list of [frequently asked questions](#) to see if skydiving's for you. Try tandem skydiving with an experienced partner at [Skydive Elsinore](#) or [The Skydiving Place](#).

Windsurfing in your future? Take a look at [Shake-A-Leg Miami](#), which also offers free lodging at its annual event for people with disabilities. Accessible boards <http://www.star-board.com/> make cutting across the water a reality for many, while [tandem windsurfing](#) is an exhilarating experience for the visually impaired.

No Learning Curve

[The Challenged Athletes' Foundation](#)

[World Team Sports](#)

[The MORGAN Project](#)

[Neighborhood Heart](#)

[Athletes Helping Athletes](#)

[Women's Sports Foundation](#)

[Disabled Sports USA](#)

Camps

[The Adaptive Sports Center of Crested Butte](#)

[Camp Acorn](#)

[Challenge Unlimited and Ironstone Therapy](#)

[National Ability Center](#)

[National Sports Center for the Disabled](#)

[New England Handicapped Sports Association](#)

[SPLORE](#)

[US Adaptive Recreation Center](#)

At Home or Away At Camp

No Learning Curve

There are times you just want to hang close to home, and the summer months offer plenty of opportunity to get active without planning a major excursion. Here are some ideas for quick fun in your own backyard or a neighborhood park.

A little Frisbee action is always fun with a human or canine companion. If your partner has four legs, do him a favor and use one of the [cloth discs](#) that are easier on his teeth and mouth (and won't break your window if your throw's a little off).

Ever heard of bocce (or boccia) ball? Popular in Europe, it's also known as lawn bowling here in the States. Underhand throws place your ball close to a target ball, or send your rivals' balls further away. A beginner's set will cost you about \$30 [online](#), or you can cough up the big bucks for professional equipment. Play it on the traditional grass court, or move it indoors for maximum wheelchair accessibility.

How about a game of croquet? If it's been a while since you played, it's been too long! Make some lemonade and invite a few friends over, or pack a picnic lunch to take to a local park. Kids and adults can compete together with this warm-weather classic.

What do windmills, plaster gorillas and waterfalls have in common? They all can be found at miniature golf courses! Everyone's got a chance for that elusive hole-in-one at this iconic American summer staple. For a cool treat during a heat wave, wait until dusk and play at a facility with lights.

Camps

Regardless of your age or disability, there's a summer sports camp that you can attend. The only problem is going to be choosing which one!

Some general considerations apply, no matter where you go:

- What is the ratio of campers to staff? To volunteers?
- How long has the camp been in operation?
- What do past participants have to say about it?
- What are the qualifications/training of staff and volunteers?
- What kind of medical assistance is available? Is it available 24 hours a day?
- Is adaptive sports equipment for your specific needs available at the camp?
- Where will you stay? How's the food?
- Will you have free time, or is every minute filled?
- Are there choices about what to do?



Do you want to try a wide range of sports? An event like [No Barriers Festival at Shake-A-Leg Miami](#) may be for you. Try trekking or Nordic walking, engage in some friendly wheelchair fencing, bend with adaptive yoga or swim with the dolphins. Handcycling, sailing, outrigger canoeing, horseback riding and scuba diving are some of the many offerings at this four-day event, where you can also check out the latest in mobility vehicles for land and water, try out a wheelchair that climbs mountains or talk with a disability leader.

Perhaps you're more interested in land-based sports or need more flexible timing. Adults and youth are welcome at [Blaze Sports](#), which promotes sports and healthy living to people with physical disabilities. They offer a special camp for first-timers, and another just for high-performance athletes. A camp for leisure and recreational activities rounds out the program. Or you may prefer to take advantage of recreational opportunities closer to home. [Adaptive Adventures](#) is on the road most months of the year with a trailer full of adaptive sports equipment. Cycling, canoeing and kayaking are just a few of the offerings from this mobile adventure company, which has the additional advantage of being able to partner with a number of local organizations for special events.

Some camps provide programs specific to their location, which is perfect if you want to concentrate on increasing your skills in one area. For example, [Ride a Wave](#) provides a California beach experience to physically, developmentally and economically challenged kids. People have travelled from around the globe to attend the free camp that teaches marine biology, tandem surfing, boogie boarding, kayaking and marine safety.