

How AT Can Help You at Play

“Recreation, leisure and exercise are a critical component of a healthy, satisfying and productive life,” according to the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Recreational Technologies (RERC Rec-Tech). However, if you have a disability or have difficulty performing certain tasks due to a functional limitation, it may be challenging to find the right recreational activities for you.

Outdoor activities like cycling, fishing, golf, or horseback riding are great ways to get exercise and enjoy the world. Indoor activities, such as playing board games, cards, video games, and musical instruments offer exercise for the mind and opportunities for socialization. With advances in assistive technology (AT), you can enjoy various forms of recreation. No one needs to miss out on fun with all the adapted products on the market today.



Outdoor Recreation

Spending time outdoors is beneficial to your health, a good way to get exercise, and enjoyable! There are many AT options that can help you to do what you like.

If bike riding is your passion, there are a number of adapted bikes available. An adult tricycle can be used if you have balance, mobility, or neurological disabilities. There are also recumbent styles available if you enjoy, or achieve more power by, leaning back and pedaling. There are

hand propelled cycles available if you have lower extremity disabilities or prefer pedaling with your hands. Tandem bikes also provide another option to the standard two wheel bicycle.

Stay Active with a Disability

From healthfinder.gov

Regular physical activity provides important health benefits for everyone, including people with disabilities. Getting active can help you strengthen your heart, build strong muscles and bones, improve coordination and relieve stress, improve your mood, and help you feel better about yourself.

Before you begin...

- Talk to your doctor about the types and amounts of physical activity that are right for you. If you are taking medicine, be sure to find out how it will affect your physical activity.
- It's also a good idea to talk to a trained exercise professional. Find a fitness center near you that is comfortable and accessible. Ask if they have experience working with people with similar disabilities.

Aim for 2 hours and 30 minutes a week of moderate aerobic activities.

- These include walking fast or pushing yourself in a wheelchair, swimming, raking leaves, or other activities that make your heart beat faster.
- Start slowly. Be active for at least 10 minutes at a time.

Do strengthening activities 2 days a week.

- These include sit-ups, push-ups, or lifting weights.
- Try working on the muscles that you use less often because of your disability.

Find support and stick with it.

- Take along a friend, especially if you are trying out a new activity.
- If you don't meet your physical activity goal, don't give up. Start again tomorrow.
- Be active according to your abilities. Remember, some physical activity is better than none!

Visit healthfinder.gov for more health tips.

If you love fishing, there are several types of adapted fishing rods available. If you need to fish using one hand, there are one handed fishing rods and holders available. If you have upper mobility issues, there are automated rods that can help you to independently cast out your line

and land that fish. There are also rod holders that can easily be fastened to your wheelchair while you fish.

If you're a golf lover, there is plenty of adapted equipment. Adapted golf clubs are available if you have the use of one hand or if you use a wheelchair. There are adapted golf carts, if you have balance or lower extremity disabilities, to make getting around the course easier. If you're blind, you can enjoy golf through adjustable alignment devices that allow you to keep your putter aligned to the direction of a cup. If you find that the best part of golf is walking the course but have balance and mobility issues, there is a golf walker available that allows you to push the walker across the course while carrying the clubs in the walker.

If you want to go horseback riding, there are AT solutions available to make it possible. Saddle accessories can assist in safely securing you to your horse if you have difficulties in maintaining balance while riding. If you use a wheelchair, there are lifts on the market that help you get on your horse.

Indoor Recreation

Indoor activities can be just as fun as outdoor activities. And, of course, these activities can be done despite the weather. Below are just some of the options out there.

If you're interested in indoor fun, there are options like card and board games that have been adapted for you. You can find large print and Braille playing cards. There are also board games like Chunky Tic Tac Toe and Chinese Checkers with special features to assist you in playing if you have upper mobility or fine motor challenges.

If you're a gamer of the non-board variety, AT offers many options in the area of video games. If you need adapted controllers, there are many different types available on the market as well as do-it-yourself instructions on how to modify controllers. There are one handed controllers, switches, joysticks, and track balls that offer different benefits depending on your personal needs. Some of the games available now are not only entertaining but are also educational and teach cognitive and developmental skills.

If you're a musician, there are instruments and musical accessories adapted to fit almost every need. There is large print music available if you have low vision and Braille sheet music if you're blind. There are also many do-it-yourself techniques for modifying guitars to be one handed instruments. In addition, there are switch adapted instruments that allow you to play them with less use of your hands or by using other parts of your body, like your feet.

With the diversity of AT available, you can likely find a way to participate in activities you enjoy or find new ones. Many states have a department devoted to recreation for people with disabilities that lists classes and places to go in your area that are accessible. Be sure to explore options to see what works best for you.

For More Information

AbleData provides listings of products that may work for you. Visit our Recreation product category section

at: <http://abledata.com/abledata.cfm?pageid=19327&top=12691&deep=2&trail=22&ksectionid=19327>. You may also find other category sections helpful.

Visit <http://abledata.com/abledata.cfm?pageid=19327&ksectionid=19327> for a list of all of our category sections.

Interested in finding out about recreational activities available in your neighborhood? Visit Disability.gov which provides an extensive list of sports, travel, and leisure related organizations and resources: <http://tinyurl.com/nsz5ls7>. The list can be filtered by location, audience, and type of disability.

References

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