

Guest Post: Adaptations Create Possibilities

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10/09/2024



Top Sports participants hold up their trophies after the last T-Ball game of the season

To adapt means “to make something suitable for a new use or purpose; modify” or to “become adjusted to new conditions.” Adaptations have been a part of my whole life. My grandpa made me a little table so I could play with my toys sitting on the floor. My neighbor made me a stander so I could be upright at the kitchen counter with my mom.

The adaptations continued in school. I was allowed to type assignments when other students were writing by hand. Worksheets were large print, I had textbooks in the classroom and at home, and notetakers so I could pay full attention. In college, my textbooks were converted to electronic format. These adaptations and others were a normal part of how I interacted with the world.

Adaptations are not only needed in the home and school, but for leisure activities as well. I once had a chalk machine attached to the back of my wheelchair so I could draw on the sidewalk. I played catch with a Velcro mitt. Watching and participating in sports is a big part of our society, and those with disabilities often want to be included in sports. Even if you don’t want to compete in a sport, there are health benefits to being as physically active as possible.

The well-documented benefits of being physically active include improved attention and memory, building strong muscles and endurance, improved blood pressure, reducing your risk of chronic diseases, strengthening bones, and maintaining body weight. It also can improve sleep quality and reduce feelings of anxiety. It’s good for your brain health and heart health, along with maintaining your balance and coordination. Physical activity fosters

normal growth and development and can make people feel better.

The most general advice for everyone is to move our body more. When you have a physical disability or impairment, that can be a challenge. This is where adaptive sports can help. Along with the physical health benefits, they can provide friendship and support and the knowledge that you’re not the only one living with a disability. People with disabilities are the world’s largest minority, at 15% of the population, or about one billion people, and adaptive sports give people a place to meet each other.

The adaptive sports community is growing, but options do vary depending on where you live, where you might be willing to travel, and your specific disability. A great place to start looking is [Move United](#), a nonprofit organization that has become the national leader in community adaptive sports, with 239 member organizations in 45 states. Their website lets you search for adaptive sports opportunities, explore adaptive sports research, and more. You can also do a basic internet search for a sport you’re interested in, adding the word adaptive, and see what comes up.

When I watched the 2024 Paralympic Games this summer, I was amazed. One athlete I discovered is Ezra Frech, who won the gold medal in the high jump and 100-meter race in his category (T63, which is for athletes with one leg amputated above the knee who compete with a prosthesis). His first word was “ball,” and he counted by twos first because he loved basketball. He played several sports growing up, and when he was eight years old, his father took him from Southern California to Oklahoma for his first adaptive track and field meet. Shortly thereafter, his father started a nonprofit called Angel City Sports in their hometown of Los Angeles, because why should a disabled person from Southern California need to travel all the way to Oklahoma to run, jump, and throw things? Eleven years later, Angel City Sports provides year-round adaptive sports opportunities for kids, adults, and veterans with physical disabilities or visual impairments, including equipment, coaching, and competitive opportunities. Since opening in 2013, Angel City Sports has provided over 24,000 athlete experiences. Annually, ACS provides 250 clinics across 25 sports.

Ezra Frech is only 19 years old and has already become a world champion, a world record holder, and a two-time Paralympic gold medalist. His goals go far beyond competition, though. He’s also a motivational speaker and a disability rights advocate. He says, “I see the Paralympics and I see track and field as a catalyst or a vehicle to normalize disability on a global scale, to

be an example of what is possible as an amputee.” His ongoing motivation, his north star, is to help the disabled community at large.

Whether you want to compete in a sport, have fun playing a sport for the physical benefits, or play sports to hang out with friends, physical activity is important. Once you realize that adaptive sports are possible, you could gain confidence that filters into the other aspects of your life. These impacts go beyond a sport and give people new hope and new perspective. In adaptive sports, adaptation is not only possible; it is embraced.

Adaptive Recreation Programs in Utah

[Top Sports Activities](#) (An IDRPP Program in Cache County)

[Common Ground Outdoor Adventures](#) (Cache County)

[National Ability Center](#) (Based in Park City)

[Wasatch Adaptive Sports](#) (Snowbird Resort, Murray)

[Ogden Valley Adaptive Sports](#) (Ogden)

Check out Move United's [list of chapters in Utah!](#)