

# Health Benefits of Individuals with a Disability Participating in Sport

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## Abstract

Participating in sports can enhance a person with a disability's physical and mental health, as well as their functionality and anxiety levels. In spite of this, a sizable portion of people with disabilities are inactive. The literature on the experiences and perceived health advantages of sport involvement for kids, teens, adults, elite athletes, and veterans with disabilities will be synthesised for the first time in this review. Understanding these occurrences will help researchers better understand the advantages and health benefits of sport involvement that are unique to each population. By promoting these advantages, researchers want to increase participation rates and, ultimately, improve people's health.

**Keywords:** Integrative • Restoration • Medication

## Introduction

Disability elicits unfavourable stereotypes and prejudice in many countries, and people with impairments frequently face societal barriers. People with disabilities are typically excluded from education, employment, and communal life as a result of the stigma attached to disabilities, depriving them of opportunities crucial to their social development, health, and well-being. In some societies, people with disabilities are viewed as reliant and unable, which encourages inactivity and, as a result, limits the mobility of people with physical disabilities beyond what their disability originally caused. Sport may change how the community views people with disabilities by showcasing their abilities and decreasing the inclination to focus on the disability rather than the individual. This helps to lessen the stigma and discrimination associated with disability. Like other disability programmes, there are more possibilities for disability sports and leisure, which is a significant weapon for bringing about positive change in our society. All people have the chance to enhance both their physical and mental health through sports and recreation, which has both short-term and long-term health benefits [1-3].

## Methods

Sports and leisure activities contribute to the development and reinforcement of critical social and life skills by fostering a good and welcoming social environment. All people can benefit from participating in these activities by getting out into the community and developing a positive outlook and sense of wellbeing. Sport and recreation have the exceptional capacity to cut over linguistic, cultural, and social barriers. Disability sports and leisure are an excellent instrument for promoting the inclusion and wellbeing of individuals of all abilities because of its widespread appeal and capacity to bring people from various backgrounds together.

Sport and recreational events are organised by individuals with disabilities all throughout Australia in an effort to reap the benefits of the community.

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Community members can establish a supportive social network and make friends with people who have similar life experiences thanks to these organised events. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has made something very clear to me: I miss sports! I miss watching my favorite sports on TV so much that my wife keeps checking on me to see if I'm okay – ha! I'm sure I'm not the only one going through this right now, but I just had to publicly admit it. Most importantly, I miss participating in sports. Whether playing or watching, it's one of the best ways for me to relax and recharge my battery.

## Discussion

That's why I want to talk some more about the importance of adaptive sports and their role in improving the lives of people living with a disability. There is no need to change some sports. For kids who use wheelchairs, the buoyancy they experience while swimming, for instance, gives them a sense of independence. Changes can be made to other activities to make them more appropriate. Children who receive the right guidance can learn to ride a horse through therapeutic riding programmes, for instance. Additionally, these programmes make use of unique tools to safeguard kids regardless of their individual demands. Participation at the level of competition is also possible. Various wheelchair sports teams and leagues exist. Children can participate in the Special Olympics as well [4,5]. Parents of children with special needs should encourage participation in sports and physical activity in general. Don't approach sports as something they can't do. Rather, guide them toward taking part in sports in which they can succeed and have fun doing so.

See to it that your child gets a complete physical exam. It helps make sure your child is healthy enough to play the desired sport. Also make sure that the coach understands your child's disability. He or she needs to know how it might affect the way your child plays or takes instruction. The coach needs to know how to correctly talk and work with your child to make sports participation the positive, safe, and healthy experience it should be. Being around others my age who had spinal cord injuries and other similar diseases like spina bifida helped me feel less alone. Additionally, it provided me with the chance to observe others and learn from them in order to create more effective work methods. For instance, by observing my friends, I discovered better techniques to get in and out of my wheelchair and load it into my car on my own [6].

## Conclusion

While descriptive and comparative statistics on the participation rates and physical activity patterns of people with disabilities are scarce, the evidence that is available generally demonstrates that these individuals participate in less physical activity than their peers who are able-bodied. According to estimates,

more than 60% of individuals globally do not engage in the recommended amounts of physical activity for their health, and this percentage is significantly higher among women and persons with disabilities. According to the findings of a survey conducted by the National Disability Authority, there are twice as many disabled people in Ireland who do not engage in regular physical activity.

There are now significantly more studies that are exploring the motives behind the participation of people with a disability in sport. Blinde and McCallister found that people with a disability when asked, participated in physical activity and sport in order to maintain body functionality, for social interaction and for the psychological benefits of sport such as stress relief and increased self-confidence. Additionally Henderson and Bendini cited pleasure, fun, to feel better, to relax and reduce stress and to improve or maintain fitness as the major reasons why people with a disability chose to be physically active. Wu and Williams discovered similar reasons. This work was conducted with people with a spinal cord injury, both male and female, who saw fitness, fun, health and competition as the major reasons to participate in sport after injury. Here it was noted that rehabilitation and social aspects also influenced the participation of other participants.

There are still very few studies that specifically address the limitations of athletes with disabilities. The main barriers to ongoing, regular participation, according to Sherrill and Rainbolt study of elite athletes with cerebral palsy, were a lack of time, inadequate facilities and equipment, including access, distance, and availability, the absence of training partners, a lack of transportation, a lack of adequate coaching knowledge, and the absence of a regular coach.

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## Conflicts of Interest

None

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