

# Get Rolling: Tips on Exploring the Bay Area and Beyond

## Accessible Recreation, Sports and Travel

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### *Introduction*

We are fortunate to live in a place with breath taking views, amazing weather and thousands of miles of trails accessing parks throughout the bay area. While the access may not be perfect, access to recreation facilities, including play areas, swimming pools, sports facilities, fishing piers, boating facilities, golf courses, and amusement rides is addressed in the Americans with Disabilities Act<sup>1</sup>. We are fortunate in the Bay Area to have excellent access to trails, picnic and camping sites, and beaches. This tip sheet provides some accessible resources for things like parks, playgrounds and how to be involved in recreational activities in the bay area and beyond. We also provide some resources to plan an out of town vacation.

### **Accessible Parks, Trails Facilities and Recreation Programs**

Don't feel you have to travel far to have a good time. Our local area is filled with incredible parks, programs and facilities that are accessible. Below are some links to resources that will help you explore what the bay area has to offer.

Most cities have accessible recreation information and programs listed on their websites. Here are a few examples:

- San Francisco Programs <http://sfrecpark.org/about/disability-questions/>
- Redwood City <http://www.redwoodcity.org/departments/parks-recreation-and-community-services/activities-programs/accessible-recreation>
- Alameda <https://alamedaca.gov/city-hall/commission-disability-issues/accessible-recreation-cdi>
- East Bay Information <http://www.ebparks.org/parks/accessibility>

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<sup>1</sup> US Access Board. <https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/recreation-facilities> 5/18/16

- San Jose Department of Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services houses The Office of Therapeutic Services which offers city-wide adapted sports, social recreation and mental health day rehabilitation programs. View a list of all access recreation classes. (408) 535-3570

## Playgrounds and Parks

San Francisco is filled with parks that are accessible. While Golden Gate Park is the largest, other neighborhoods also have wonderful areas, such as Mission Dolores Park, which was recently renovated.

<http://sfrecpark.org/destination/mission-dolores-park/>

Did you know you don't just have to be a kid to enjoy a playground? Recently innovative wheelchair accessible playgrounds have been built which can be incredible to explore for children and anyone young at heart.

Palo Alto's Magical Bridge Playground at Mitchell Park is the newest addition of accessible playgrounds. They have innovative play structures, accessible swings and other equipment, and a multisensory music area.

<http://www.magicalbridge.org>

Other innovative accessible playgrounds include the Rotary Play Garden in San Jose <http://www.grpg.org/rpg/> and the [Roberts Regional Recreation Area](http://www.ebparks.org/parks/roberts) <http://www.ebparks.org/parks/roberts> in the Oakland hills which has a specially designed barrier-free playground and is one of the largest playgrounds of its kind in the state.

For additional information on other California accessible playgrounds see:

<http://www.accessibleplayground.net/united-states/california/>

## Pools

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires public and hotel swimming pools, wading pools, and spas to be accessible. Large pools must have two accessible means of entry, with at least one being a pool lift or sloped entry.<sup>i</sup> Examples of some great accessible pools include:

The Pomeroy Recreation and Rehabilitation Center near the San Francisco zoo has a zero entry pool and accessible basketball courts. (415) 665- 4100

<http://www.prrcsf.org/index.php/aquatic-services/therapeutic-swim-program.html>

Abilities United has information regarding the wheelchair accessible, indoor pool at the Betty Wright Aquatic Center in Palo Alto, it is open to everyone in the

community. The center delivers quality aquatic rehabilitation, fitness and recreation services. (650) 494-1480

Avery Aquatic Center at Stanford in Palo Alto has open swim sessions, and accessible locker rooms and a wheelchair lift are available. Contact the center for additional details/arrangements. (650) 725-0725

## Accessible Trails

Thanks to disability leaders like Bonny Lewkowicz and others we have a wealth of information on Bay Area and California Coastal trails that are accessible. The guides are available online and some are even available in print by contacting the California Coastal Conservancy. Below is a list of a few resources

- Bay Area Accessible Trail Information:  
<http://bahiker.com/extras/allaccess.html>
- **San Francisco Bay Area Wheelchair Accessible Trails**  
<http://www.wheelchairtrails.net>
- **Mid Peninsula** <http://www.openspace.org/what-to-do/activities/accessible>
- **WheelingCalscoast.org / California Coastal Conservancy** California's spectacular coast offers many outdoor adventures for wheelchair riders, parents pushing strollers, and others who need accessibility features such as a wide, fairly level and firm path of travel. This guide can help you choose the destinations that suit your needs from among the coast's many wheelchair-accessible parks, trails, beaches, viewpoints, and other sites of interest. [http://accessnca.org/recreation/recreation\\_details.php](http://accessnca.org/recreation/recreation_details.php) and <http://www.wheelingcalscoast.org>
- **Hiking Adventures with "4Wheel Bob"** Wheelchair hiker Bob Coomber, aka 4WheelBob, offers monthly write-ups on his favorite East Bay Regional Park District hiking trails.
- **Transit & Trails** This website helps you plan a park or trail adventure using public transit in the San Francisco/Bay Area. Content is user generated so consider contributing your favorite trail or park.
- **Wheelchair Trails** Ann Sieck, wheelchair riding outdoor enthusiast, reviews trails in the San Francisco Bay Area.
- Oregon and Washington  
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r6/specialplaces/?cid=stelprdb5394541>
- National Information <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/accessible/>

## Beaches

Specially designed chairs that roll over sand are available free of charge at many beaches. Most are manually operated and must be pushed by someone, but sometimes motorized chairs are available and can be operated independently. All of the beaches listed in the link from the California Coastal Commission below lend them free of charge. Users may be asked to leave a form of personal identification while borrowing the chair. Chairs are most commonly available from a lifeguard or the entrance kiosk at a beach, but may be at concessionaires. Some may be reserved ahead of time, while others are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Call ahead for availability.

<http://www.coastal.ca.gov/access/beach-wheelchairs.html>

Beach Wheelchairs can also be purchased. See the links to vendors below:

- [Beach Cruzr](#)
- [De-Bug](#)
- [Landeerz](#)

## National and State Parks

[Cabrillo National Monument](#) (access page)

[Point Reyes National Seashore](#) (access page)

[Golden Gate National Recreation Area](#) (access page)

[Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy](#) (general information about GNRA)

[California State Parks](#) (access page)

[Santa Cruz State Parks](#) (general information)

[State Parks of the San Luis Obispo County Coast](#) (general information)

### Regional Parks

[East Bay Regional Parks](#) (access page)

[Sonoma County Regional Parks](#) (access page)

## Sports and Recreation

### Environmental Traveling Companions (ETC)

<http://www.etctrips.org> , (415) 474-7662

ETC in San Francisco offers whitewater rafting, sea kayaking and cross-country skiing adventures for people of all ages with a range of disabilities. ETC books trips for agencies, schools and individuals with disabilities, along with their families and friends.

(415) 474-7662

### Bay Area Outreach & Recreation Program

[www.borp.org](http://www.borp.org) ph: 510-849-4663, E-mail: [info@borp.org](mailto:info@borp.org)

The Bay Area Outreach and Recreation Program provides challenging and

innovative sports and recreation programs to area residents with physical disabilities and visual impairments.

### **Disabled Adventures Outfitters**

[http://www.specialadventures.org/Home\\_Page.html](http://www.specialadventures.org/Home_Page.html)

<https://www.facebook.com/Disabled-Adventure-Outfitters-112619332295/>

Offer year-round outdoor adventures for people with disabilities, their friends and family. Based out of Arcata.

### **Achieve Tahoe (Disabled Sports USA Far West)**

<http://achievetahoe.org> / <https://www.facebook.com/AchieveTahoe>

530-581-4161

Offer year-round outdoor adventures in the Lake Tahoe area and Sacramento for people with disabilities, their friends and family.

### **Shared Adventures**

<http://www.sharedadventures.org>

(831) 459-7210 or email [info@sharedadventures.org](mailto:info@sharedadventures.org)

Shared Adventures offers year round outdoor recreational activities in the Santa Cruz area.

### **Tot Cycle**

<http://totcycle.com>

A website offering lots of resources, mostly aimed at families with kids with disabilities, on ways to cycle together.

### **Far West Wheelchair Athletics Association**

Alexandria Donaldson

[alexandria.donaldson@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:alexandria.donaldson@sanjoseca.gov)

Phone: (408) 794-6290

<http://fwwaa.org>

Far West Wheelchair Sports promotes sports competition, recreation and fitness to people with physical disabilities and to recognize those achievements within the community.

### **Power Soccer**

United States Power Soccer Association (USPSA)

USPSA governs power soccer, a competitive sport that was designed specifically for power wheelchair users. If you are interested in playing with a team located in northern California or around the U.S., contact the USPSA for more information.

<http://www.powersoccerusa.org/jointeam>

### **Wheelchair Basketball**

Bay Area Outreach & Recreation Program has wheelchair basketball programs for adults and children. No experience playing wheelchair basketball is necessary.

Basketball wheelchairs are provided if needed. Contact [www.borp.org](http://www.borp.org) ph: 510-849-

4663, E-mail: [info@borp.org](mailto:info@borp.org). You can also contact the National Wheelchair Basketball association for more information on additional teams  
<http://www.nwba.org/page/show/2065393-find-a-team>

## **Golf**

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires all public accommodations, including golf courses, to provide goods and services to people with disabilities on an equal basis with the rest of the general public.” Also, many golf courses offer accommodations such as modified golf carts with swivel seats and custom clubs. You will want to call ahead to verify which accommodations are in place at your chosen course.<sup>ii</sup> The National Alliance For Accessible Golf is working to improve the accessibility of golf and provides grants to improve access.  
<http://www.accessgolf.org/about/howeare.cfm>

San Francisco has several public golf courses including Lincoln Park, Golden Gate Park Golf Course, Harding Park, Gleneagles, Sharp and Fleming. The city does provide access to accessible golf carts but it must be reserved in advance. The accessible cart is housed at Harding Park Golf Course and is available for use with a 24 hour notice to prevent double booking of the cart. It can also be transported to Lincoln Park Golf Course or Gleneagles Golf Course in McLaren Park with a 72-hour notice period. Golden Gate Park Golf Course is exclusively a walking course and is experienced without golf carts or cart paths. Due to environmental restrictions at Sharp Park Golf Course, golf carts are permitted ONLY on cart paths. Harding Park and Fleming Golf Courses – 18-hole and 9-hole, respectively - offer a complete range of golfing experiences and are fully accessible. Lincoln Park and Sharp Park are both 18-hole courses and Golden Gate Park and Gleneagles are both 9-hole courses. These four properties offer limited accessibility. For more information see the City of San Francisco’s page:  
<http://sfrecpark.org/about/disability-questions/>

## **Sailing**

Bay Area Association of Disabled Sailors (BAADS)  
Pier 40, The Embarcadero  
San Francisco, CA, 94107  
415-281-0212  
<http://www.baads.org>

BAADS seeks to make all aspects of sailing in the San Francisco Bay Area accessible. This includes full participation in teaching sailing, cruising, racing, and developing engineering designs for adaptive equipment to benefit people with diverse abilities.

OSA Able Sail - adapted programs and accessible sailboats for persons with special need.

## Exercise / Accessible Gyms

The accessibility of gyms can vary. Some say they are wheelchair accessible, meaning you can get into the facility, have access to an elevator, maybe use of a pool via a lift but the gym workout equipment may not be accessible. Specifically designed machines are available but also gyms can make choices when purchasing fitness machines and modifications can be made to conventional equipment for better access. Machines designed with seats that swing out and allow for wheelchair users to access the machines are a great example of universal design. Extra belts can be added to some conventional machines to prevent falling off for those with compromised function that would impair balance or stability.

Thanks to advocacy done by Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) and others some commercial fitness chains have begun to address accessibility on a broad scale.<sup>iii</sup> Contact your local gym for more information.

The National Center on Physical Activity and Disability - a federally funded project at the University of Illinois at Chicago has great resources on accessible gym equipment and general access tips. Also they have instructions on exercises for specific disabilities or conditions, adapted physical education, position papers, fitness and health promotion and community recreation.

Even if the gym is accessible and you find a place with equipment that meets your needs, many gyms often do not have staff trained specifically to work with people with disabilities. Often specialized programs, rehab facilities and physical therapists are your best sources for staff knowledgeable about adapting exercises to a variety of needs. Below is a list of some local resources.

UC Berkley, Recreation Sports Facility. (Berkley)

<http://recsports.berkeley.edu/about/member-services/membership-types/cal-star/>

The RSF currently has 19 pieces of equipment accessible to people living with disabilities. The majority of these machines are recently purchased Nautilus One machines that boast a number of accessible-friendly features.

Riekes Center Adaptive Sports and Fitness (Menlo Park)

Phone: 650-298-3404 skelleher@riekes.org/

The Riekes Center for Human Enhancement, located in Menlo Park, offers customizable workout plans and adaptable training equipment based on an individual's needs. The Riekes Center also offers several programs, specifically for individuals with disabilities, some of which include archery, biathlon, rowing, strength and conditioning, swimming and wheelchair rugby. Please contact the

Riekes Center for more information regarding their adaptive sports and fitness programs.

### **SCI-FIT (Pleasanton, CA )**

**Phone:** (925) 846-1848

SCI-FIT (Spinal Cord Injury Functional Integrated Therapy) offers rehabilitation and personal training with accessible facilities for people with neurological and spinal cord injury.

### **Accessible Fitness** (Santa Clara)

2936 Scott Boulevard, Santa Clara, California, 95054

**Phone:** (408) 986-1419

Accessible Fitness is an organization established to help people with physical disabilities to attain both the physical and the mental benefits of exercise. They make fitness lifestyle available to all those who are interested, by providing in-home personal training and a Fitness Center that offers complete wheelchair accessibility.

YMCA's can be a low cost solution for access to a gym and pool. Contact your local area YMCA for more information on accessibility.

San Francisco has a variety of locations contact the location nearest to you for access information. <http://www.ymcasf.org>

Fremont, Hazel R Keene Wellness Center, reports they are wheelchair accessible and have a few pieces of adaptive equipment .

<http://www.fremontfamilyymca.org/facilities.html>

## **Other California Accessible Gyms:**

### **Goodwill Fitness Center**

**Phone:** (888) 623-4823

The Goodwill Fitness Center is designed especially for people with disabilities and chronic illness and is a state-of-the-art 12,000 square foot facility located at 1601 E. St. Andrew Place in Santa Ana. Fully outfitted with the finest accessible fitness equipment and staffed by trained fitness professionals, the center is open five days a week.

### **NextStep Fitness Inc**

**Phone:** (310) 546-5666

NextStep is a state-of-the-art outpatient fitness center that brings the most cutting edge training methods, procedures, and technologies to rehabilitation for spinal injury, multiple sclerosis, stroke, and traumatic brain injury victims in the greater Los Angeles County. A California Non-Profit Corporation, the goal of NextStep Fitness, Inc. is to create a fitness environment for individuals with physical



disabilities - where everyday fitness & wellness is available and supported in a state-of-the-art facility.

### **Creative and Expressive Activities**

- [Axis Dance Company](#) (Oakland) - a wheelchair dance troupe based in Oakland, CA. AXIS has workshops and classes and summer intensives for wheelchair dance.
- [VSA Arts](https://www.semel.ucla.edu/nadc/support-resource/vsa-california) <https://www.semel.ucla.edu/nadc/support-resource/vsa-california> (Based in LA ) promoting both the power of the arts in the lives of people with disabilities and increased access to the arts, through education, cultural facilities, events, and in the workplace.
- Culture Disability Talent (CDT) (Berkeley) <http://www.culturedisabilitytalent.org/mission.html> CDT is a non-profit, collaborative organization that works to transform disability stereotypes by providing access and opportunities for performers and mediamakers with disabilities. Comprised of disability cultural artists, activists and allies, CDT promotes artistic excellence and diversity by presenting disability cultural events.
- NIAD Arts Center (Richmond) <http://niadart.org> provides art instruction, open studio type and gallery for artists to sell their work.

### **Other Creative and Expressive Activities Groups outside California**

- Dance Ability- <http://www.danceability.com> (Eugene, Oregon) disabled & abled teachers & performers diminishing attitudinal barriers about disability. They have courses to teach instructors for adaptive dance.
- [Dancing Wheels](http://www.dancingwheels.org/) – <http://www.dancingwheels.org/> (Cleveland, Ohio) an integrated modern dance company and school comprised of dancers with and without disabilities.
- [Full Radius Dance](https://www.fullradiusdance.org/) <https://www.fullradiusdance.org/>(Georgia) explores, through modern dance, human experience in a world of diversity of attitudes, actions and outcomes with particular emphasis on persons with disabilities in Georgia.
- [Wheelchair Dance Sport](#) - International Paralympic Committee.

### **Once in a Lifetime Experiences**

#### **[Up & Away Ballooning's Pegasus Project](#)**

**Phone:** (707) 836-0171

In Spring 2011, Up & Away Ballooning became the first hot air balloon operator in the United States to offer wheelchair-using adventurers the opportunity to soar above the magnificent hills and vineyards of Northern California's Sonoma County. The Pegasus Project's specially-designed and crafted passenger basket, shipped directly from England, will make it possible for those persons who use wheelchairs for mobility to literally float above the Wine Country.

## Travel Resources

### Cruises

The Port of San Francisco hosts over 80 cruise ship calls and 300,000 passengers annually at the James R. Herman (Pier 27) and Pier 35 cruise terminals. Itineraries include round trip cruises from San Francisco to Alaska, Hawaii, and Mexico, as well as repositioning calls and coastal voyages in the spring and fall.

Cruises are an excellent choice for an accessible vacation, as most of the newer cruise ships have good access. Below is a list of tips for planning a cruise vacation. <sup>iv</sup>

- Contact the cruise line's Special Needs Department for detailed access information and disability accommodation access requests.
- Remember to request pier assistance when you book your cruise. Disabled passengers are given priority boarding upon advance request.
- Most ships have wheelchairs that can be borrowed for embarkation, but if you need one full-time or ashore, arrange for a rental to be delivered to your cabin. Contact the cruise line for a list of their approved vendors.
- Some cruise lines can also provide special equipment, such as a commode chair or a shower chair, upon advance request.
- Don't assume all accessible cabins are the same. If you need a specific feature, such as a roll-in shower, ask if it's available.
- Plan ahead! Accessible cabins are in short supply so try to book at least 6-9 months in advance to get your first choice of sailing dates. Accessible balcony cabins on Alaska cruises go like hotcakes, so book those as soon as they become available.
- If you use a compact folding scooter, make sure cabin doorways are wide enough to accommodate them, as most cruise lines don't allow scooters to be parked in hallways.
- If you use a power wheelchair or scooter, make sure the electrical supply on the ship is compatible with your battery charger. It's also a good idea to

- pack an extension cord and a power strip, as electric outlets are limited.
- If you take along a manual wheelchair, mark it clearly with your name or personalize it in some way, so it won't be mistaken for one of the ship's wheelchairs.
  - Take a tour of the ship on the first day and locate the accessible restrooms on each deck. Make note of the locations for future use.
  - Become familiar with the tendering procedures of your preferred cruise line. Some cruise lines hand-carry wheelchair-users aboard tenders, some use mechanical devices and some do not permit power wheelchair-users to tender at all.
  - Ask a lot of questions about ship sponsored shore excursions. In most cases you have to be able to climb up the steps of a tour bus in order to participate. Do your research and plan your own accessible shore excursions.
  - Finding accessible transportation can be difficult in some ports. It can be helpful to look for ports where the town is easy to access from the ships terminal; Alaska ports have some good options.
  - If you need transportation, arrange in advance to make sure it's accessible. For example, it is unlikely that if one mode of transportation isn't accessible another one probably is at the last minute. Even finding accessible transportation for power wheelchair users in this country can be a challenge, let alone in places where disability laws are not the same. It is important to plan and then be as flexible as you can.
  - If you use a power wheelchair or scooter and can transfer, it can be helpful to bring along a manual wheelchair for use in port. This is especially helpful in Caribbean ports, where it's difficult to find lift-equipped transportation.
  - For assistance in planning contact the cruise ship company, they may have names of transportation companies that have accessible transportation. Also see link to "Gimp on the Go" website that has a list of ground transportation and tour operators.

### **Tips for Flying with a Wheelchair**

People are constantly hearing horror stories about flying with a wheelchair. You might think flying is impossible. Don't let fear of dealing with airport security and airlines prevent you from traveling. While airlines are notorious about damaging wheelchairs, we have developed some tips from other wheelchair users that will hopefully make the process of flying a bit smoother. First, it can be helpful to understand the legal requirements around accessibility and how to file a complaint if you have a problem.

Legal requirements for accessibility of airlines and airports are managed by the Department of Transportation. In the document, *New Horizons for the Air Traveler with a Disability*, the Department explains the Air Carriers Access Act regulations that came into effect in March, 1990, as well as the changes resulting from the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). This document will also give you information on accessibility of airports and aircraft; requirements for advance notice, attendants and medical certificates; handling of mobility aids and assistive devices; and much more, including how to file a complaint  
<http://publications.usa.gov/USAPubs.php?PubID=3209>

Any problems with your flight need to be reported first to the airline, then contact the Hotline for Disability-Related Air Travel Issues.

<http://airconsumer.dot.gov/hotline.htm> The department of Transportation, The Office of the Assistant General Counsel for Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings offers a toll-free number that consumers who experience disability-related air travel problems may use to obtain information and assistance. This service provides general information to consumers about the rights of air travelers with disabilities and assists air travelers in resolving time-sensitive disability-related issues that need to be addressed in real time. This service is available seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. ET. The toll-free number is 1-800-778-4838 (voice) or 1-800-455-9880 (TTY).

You can also talk to your airline and ask to talk to a complaints resolution official (CRO). All airlines are required to have one. Below are a few tips on flying from wheelchair users that are frequent fliers: <sup>v vi</sup>

1. Make sure your chair has been serviced before you leave: If your chair has not been serviced recently, send it to a repair shop for a general check over. This extra effort can save the heartache of suffering a breakdown; and save the time wasted trying to locate a repair shop and waiting for the repair.
2. Any property handed over to the airline should be tagged and you should include your name and contact information. Place your name and address on your wheelchair and on all removable parts before leaving home. A return address, sticky mailing label covered by a piece of clear tape works well. It's important to label your chair because some people have had manual chairs taken by airline staff because they think it's an "airport chair." It's helpful to ask the person who brings your chair to the jet-way to stay with your chair until you arrive to claim it.
3. Tape a list, in large fonts on brightly colored paper, with the instructions and cautions for ground crews at both ends of the flight. One wheelchair user suggested beginning the note with, "DO YOU WANT TO BUY THIS WHEELCHAIR?"

4. If your wheelchair is equipped with pneumatic tires, bring along a small repair kit containing the items necessary to change a flat. Bicycle repair shops have all types of nifty, compact repair kits you can bring along, including a small air pump. You can get ones that are about 7 inches long and about 1 inch in diameter. Do not let the airline deflate your tires. If they insist, make sure there is a plan to inflate them when you arrive. Document the names of airline staff that asked you to deflate your tires.<sup>vii</sup>
5. Arrive early to allow for all the logistics of getting you through security, getting on the plane and having the airline get your wheelchair on the plane. Go to the ticket agent (even if you have your boarding pass already) to let them know you'll need assistance, get seats in the front, and tell them you'll need to gate check your wheelchair.
6. Notify your airlines in advance that you are traveling by wheelchair. Inform them if you are traveling with a manual wheelchair, an electric wheelchair, or a scooter. When reconfirming your flight, ask the airline for "maximum assistance" at all airport terminals. Reconfirm your request for "maximum assistance" when you arrive at the airline ticket counter.
7. At the airport, ask the ticket personnel to "gate check" your wheelchair and obtain a luggage claim receipt for your wheelchair. When you "gate check" your wheelchair it allows you to roll your wheelchair directly to the fuselage of the plane where you will either walk to your seat or transfer into an "aisle chair" for assistance to your seat. It's important to arrive early and discuss your needs with gate agents. Make sure you discuss your ability to transfer to an "aisle chair." sometimes the airline will want to take your chair early (before they are ready for you to board).
8. When you get to the gate, tell them you'd like to speak to the ramp agent (the person who will take your wheelchair down to get it on the plane), to get them instructions
  - a. For manual chair you can show them how to fold the chair.
  - b. For power chairs you should show them how to put it in manual or drive. Remind them to put it in drive when it's on the plane, because that sets the brakes. They will usually ask if your power chair has wet or dry batteries. Most now are gels, but tell them the batteries are dry, because they will deem them safe to leave in the chair. Removing them risks damaging the chair and can be difficult to reassemble.
9. Before handing your wheelchair over to the airline staff, remove your leg supports and portable seat cushions and carry these into the plane, these do not travel well when attached to your wheelchair and are likely to be lost. Bring a small nylon sports bag large enough to hold the leg supports

that is also light enough to fold into your carry on luggage when not in use. This lightweight sports bag keeps your leg supports in one place and hopefully prevents them from falling out of the overhead luggage bin onto someone's head. If your wheelchair folds, collapse the wheelchair together and use a small strap or a piece of "duct tape" to hold the sides together. This process makes for a compact wheelchair that is less likely to be damaged with airport handling.

10. When possible pack spare parts such as power chair charging cords, fuses and cables that may become loose or damaged during the transport.
11. Make sure you bring all medication and spare medical supplies (such as catheters) on board to make sure you have what you need for the flight and in case the checked bag gets delayed or lost.
12. If you have a power chair or scooter there are additional tasks you need to make sure the airline does.
  - a. Airline staff needs to inform the pilot that a wheelchair with batteries is going to be put in baggage on this flight. The pilot works with the ground crew to make sure the chair is secure in the cargo. Of course this is important for any wheelchair but for power chairs and scooters with batteries this is especially important. If the pilot has concerns that the wheelchair is not properly secured they will not take off because of safety concerns. This can cause flight delays. When you book your ticket you can notify the airline and also arrive early and inform the gate agents to make sure it's in the pilot manifesto. It is strongly recommend that your electric wheelchair or scooter be equipped with "gel cell" or "dry cell" batteries. "Wet cell" batteries, like the ones used in automobiles, are strongly discouraged since airlines must separate these from your scooter or wheelchair and store them in a leak proof container.
  - b. Scooter travelers who "gate check" their scooter should assume that some member of the airline staff will be appointed to drive your scooter into the belly of the plane. Before handing your scooter over to the airline staff, place a piece of removable tape on top of the throttle control and secure the throttle control in the slowest position. This tape should read "Do Not Remove." Make sure your key, or power pin, is well secured to the scooter. Use a strong, durable cord to attach your key or control pin. Do not use a rubber band or an elastic strap to secure your key to the scooter. To secure your key or power pin to your scooter, we suggest using a 12 or 14 inch "60 or 80 pound steel leader" obtained from a fishing supply store. To avoid getting lost, remove any removable baskets and portable seat cushions and carry these into the plane.

c. Electric wheelchair travelers who "gate check" their electric wheelchair should assume that some member of the airline staff will attempt to drive your wheelchair into the belly of the plane. This is when your chair is most likely to be damaged. You want to have someone push the chair, rather than drive your chair with your joystick or other alternative controls. In order to do this, switch your chairs' transmission into "neutral" so it can be easily pushed. Inform airline staff that the chair is in neutral so it can be pushed. Unplug the battery connection between your chair and the battery and place a short piece of electrical tape over both connector ends. Better yet, if the power cord is easily removed take it with you in your carry on bag. If your "joystick control" can be easily removed, remove it! If not, then loosen the knob that positions the joystick control and point the joystick downward, towards the ground. Or last, unscrew the "joystick knob" from the control base and carry it with you into the plane. These steps will prevent your joystick from being damaged. This is one of the most common things to be damaged on your chair and will make your chair unusable once you arrive at your destination.

13. When you get off the plane, often they will want to have you get into an airport wheelchair and then get your own chair at the end of the jet way or even down at baggage claim. Do NOT let them do this, insist that you need your chair right up until you get on the plane, and you cannot get off the plane until your chair is at the door of the plane. Once you are off the plane, you are no longer the flight crew's responsibility. But while you are there, the crew will make sure you get what you need because they want to get off the plane too and can't leave until you do.

14. If you get off the plane and there is any problem with your chair, go to the baggage claim office and tell them you have a problem. They'll fill out the paperwork you will need to file a claim. Get a phone number of who to call to get your chair repaired, to see if there is a certain repair shop you need to go to, or how they handle repair expenses.

## **National and International Accessible Travel Guides**

### **Emerging Horizons**

<http://emerginghorizons.com>

Quarterly magazine about accessible travel. Website has database on accessible travel world-wide.

### **Gimp on the Go**

<http://www.gimponthego.com>

Web's most comprehensive list of disability-friendly ground transportation and

tour operators for the most common ports of call for both sea cruises and river cruises world-wide! Also has lots of information on accessible travel in general.

### **Accessible Travel Guides**

[Access Northern California](#)

[Access Santa Cruz County](#)

[Accessible Nature Travel](#)

[Accessible San Diego](#)

[San Francisco Access Guide](#)

[A Wheelchair Rider's Guide to the Los Angeles and Orange County Coast \(interactive guide, pdf version\)](#)

[A Wheelchair Rider's Guide: San Francisco Bay and Nearby Coast Accessible travel](#)

<https://wheelchairtravel.org/top-accessible-travel-tips-from-7-disability-wheelchair-travel-bloggers/>

### **Van Rentals and Public Transportation**

[Access Options](http://www.accessoptions.com/index.php)- <http://www.accessoptions.com/index.php>

Serving primarily South Bay and Monterey Counties, Access Options sells and rents accessible vehicles. 877-358-6722

[Accessible Vans of America](http://www.accessiblevans.com/) <http://www.accessiblevans.com/>

Ramped minivans for rent daily and weekly rates, airport delivery for a fee. Information Phone: 866-224-1750

[Mobility Works](http://www.mobilityworks.com/mobilityworks-locations/SanJose.php) <http://www.mobilityworks.com/mobilityworks-locations/SanJose.php>

Ramp-equipped van rentals and sales. They are based out of San Jose and serve Oakland, San Jose and San Francisco airports. 1-877-275-4915

[Sacramento Van Conversions and Mobility Services](http://sacvans.com) <http://sacvans.com>

Primarily a van modification company but they also rent accessible vans. Will pick up and deliver to San Francisco and Oakland Airports. (800) 795-0888

[Wheelchair Getaways](http://www.wheelchairgetaways.com) <http://www.wheelchairgetaways.com>

Ramped minivans for rent daily and weekly rates, airport delivery for a fee. Information Phone: (800) 642-2042

[South Tahoe Express](http://amadorstagelines.com/lake-tahoe/) <http://amadorstagelines.com/lake-tahoe/>

Lift-equipped shuttle service between Reno/Tahoe airport and 6 S. Lake Tahoe casinos.

[San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency](#)

Lists accessible service on buses, underground railways and cable cars serving San Francisco.



### San Francisco/Bay Area Transit Information

Plan your trip using public transit with this comprehensive site that serves the greater Bay Area.

### Project Action

<http://www.projectaction.org/ResourcesPublications/FindingAccessibleTransportation.aspx>

A database of accessible transportation nation-wide.

### **Travel Equipment**

Haseltine Systems <http://haseltine.com>

Specially constructed Polyethylene protective cases for transporting your wheelchair or scooter.

NuprodX

Offers lightweight and easy to transport shower and commode equipment.

Disclaimer: This article is a general summary of accessible recreation activities. This article is for informational and educational purposes only and is not intended to certify the accessibility of locations, programs, facilities or the availability to participate in various sports and recreation programs. Please contact the organizations directly to get more information in how to participate.

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<sup>i</sup> [http://www.ada.gov/pools\\_2010.htm](http://www.ada.gov/pools_2010.htm)

<sup>ii</sup> Golfers with Disabilities Reach Settlement over Accessible Golf Carts at Half Moon Bay Golf Links, DRA Legal, January 29, 2008. <http://dralegal.org/press/golfers-with-disabilities-reach-settlement-over-accessible-golf-carts-at-half-moon-bay-golf-links/>. Accessed 5/20/2016

<sup>iii</sup> DREDF, Press Release, "24 hour Fitness Welcomes Patrons with Disabilities. Leading Gym Confirms Philosophy, Fitness A Way of Life for Everyone." December 13, 2005. <http://dredf.org/press/24hrftn.html>

<sup>iv</sup> Cruise Tips for Wheelchair-Users and Slow Walkers

Candy B. Harrington November 10, 2015

<http://emerginghorizons.com/cruise-tips-for-wheelchair-users-and-slow-walkers/>

<sup>v</sup> Accessible Travel Tips: What you need to know before you go.

<http://www.disabilitytravel.com/accessible-travel-tips.htm>. Accessed June 30 2016.

<sup>vi</sup> Responses to Facebook post requesting tips on flying, names omitted for confidentiality, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2016.

<sup>vii</sup> Interview with wheelchair user, July 2017