

# Winter Edition 2019

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## ARE YOU APPROACHING 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, OR 45-YEAR(S) SINCE YOUR INJURY?

Are you approaching 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, or 45-year(s) since your injury?

If so, you may be due for your next follow-up interview. Please contact **Kayla Jones** at **312-238-1624** or **kjones05@sralab.org** to schedule your interview. Your interview can be completed by phone, mail, or in-person.



# Adaptive Sports: Anyone Can Try

What are the benefits of adaptive sports for people with disabilities?

Adaptive sports are a great way for people with disabilities to stay active and healthy. They can also help improve self-esteem and social skills. Adaptive sports are available for people with a wide range of disabilities, including physical, intellectual, and sensory disabilities. Some examples of adaptive sports include wheelchair basketball, adaptive tennis, and adaptive swimming. Adaptive sports are often played in a supportive and inclusive environment, which can help people with disabilities feel more confident and capable. Adaptive sports are also a great way to meet new people and make friends. Adaptive sports are a fun and rewarding activity for people of all ages and abilities.

A five-year grant by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research establishes a Rehabilitation Research Training Center on Employment for People with Physical Disabilities.

“While many people with functional disabilities are in the prime of their careers, they’re at high risk for job loss and unemployment,” said CROR director Allen Heinemann, PhD. “With the RRTC, we will create to give shehsceslisyn19(t hig

# Employment After Spinal Cord Injury



Being able to work provides people a way to interact with other people, higher self-esteem, and overall life satisfaction. People working after a spinal cord injury tend to live longer, have better health, and higher life satisfaction. Vocational Rehabilitation services are a great resource for people interested in employment.

## Work vs. Benefits: Finding a balance

People can be hesitant to work because they do not want to lose their medical benefits under Social Security Disability Insurance, Supplementary Security Income, or private or state long-term disability insurance. Federal work incentive programs under SSDI or

## What is vocational rehabilitation?

Vocational rehabilitation programs offer a wide range of services to help people with disabilities find jobs. Rehabilitation Counselors are trained to provide these services. These services help people with their interests and skills; training or education; finding and applying for jobs; and getting accommodations for their job.

## How does it work?

Your rehabilitation counselor will begin by helping you to find your interests, skills, limitations, health needs, work history, education history, and even personality style.

Your rehabilitation counselor can help you look at job opportunities in your area, wages, tasks, education needed, and other information.

If extra help is needed, a rehabilitation counselor can help determine whether a potential job would be a good match for you.

You might need ongoing support and accommodations at work and counselors can provide you with resources.

### Authorship:

Employment after Spinal Cord Injury was developed by Kurt Johnson, PhD and Jim Krause, PhD, in collaboration with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center.

For more information check out: <https://msktc.org/>



For the last four years, a team of researchers has been studying how family caregivers of adults with SCI adjust to their role, what their daily lives are like, and what supports they may need to provide care for their loved one. The study is funded by the U.S. Department of Defense and includes former Shriners Hospitals for Children patients and patients from Shirley Ryan AbilityLab, Schwab Rehabilitation Hospital, and Edward Hines Jr. Veterans Administration hospital. Marquette University also is a study partner. In all, the study enrolled 52 pairs of caregivers and their family members with SCI.

One aspect that sets the study apart from others is that the participants are racially diverse. It's important to understand the needs of all caregivers in order to

# Wheelchair Lets Users Move While Standing or Sitting

As much as we love covering cool tech that has the ability to make life more fun, there are few things more awesome than technology that can be used to alter people's lives for the better. That is what engineers at Chicago's Center for Bionic Medicine in the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab may have achieved with the creation of a manual standing wheelchair that does not limit its users to sitting down the whole time.



Dr. Todd Kuiken

"It's an incredibly exciting innovation that expands users' workspace and, most importantly, enables them to look their peers straight in the eye during interaction. It offers a number of physical benefits as well."



Participant using the standing wheelchair

"This is the first manual wheelchair that allows users to move while in both standing and seated positions," Dr. Todd Kuiken, who led the research, told Digital Trends.

The wheelchair's unique hand drive mechanism lets users manually drive the wheels while sitting or standing, along with any position in between.

While they do so, they are secured safely in place using a lap belt and knee restraint to protect against falls. "This wheelchair will be transformative for people who haven't stood in many years and have only looked up at the world," Kuiken continued. "It will give them the opportunity to converse, directly and at eye-level, with their peers."

Check out this link for the full video:

[https://youtu.be/4I\\_OTUS9heQ](https://youtu.be/4I_OTUS9heQ)



Participant using the standing wheelchair

While most of us take for granted simple acts like looking a coworker in the eye when we speak to them, or reaching overhead cabinets and grocery store shelves, for the 1.7 million Americans who rely on wheelchairs or scooters for mobility, things aren't so straightforward. As a result, a wheelchair like this one could prove to be a life-changer.

"The wheelchair is ready to be commercialized and we are currently in talks with potential commercial partners," Kuiken said. "In the meantime, we're working to continually refine the design."

**Authorship:** Digital Trends, Luke Dormehl

# Research Aids Prevention and Treatment of Pressure Injuries

Registered nurse Samantha Zoellick, who works in Shirley Ryan AbilityLab's Spinal Cord Innovation Center, had a question.

She noticed that many patients with paralysis were arriving at Shirley Ryan AbilityLab with their own positioning devices — everything from standard pillows to specialized foam wedges — to position themselves comfortably. Yet, despite frequent turning by nurses and the use of these devices intended to relieve pressure, some patients were experiencing discomfort nonetheless.

“We're turning patients regularly and closely following clinical protocol, but some still are getting sores,” Samantha said. “We wanted to find the root cause and to address it.”

Samantha wondered if the answer could be found in which devices were being used. Did some work better at helping position patients and relieving pressure on their bodies? Samantha asked her supervisor, Katie Ear-

We are conducting a study to evaluate the Spinal Cord Injury Quality of Life (SCI-QOL) instruments.

Participants in this study will be asked to:

- 1) Answer questions about your age, gender, education, income, description of your injury, your capabilities, your emotions, and your health;
- 2) Meet with a study investigator in person or by phone interview who will ask you questions about your emotions.

Participants must meet the following criteria:

- Sustained a traumatic spinal cord injury at least 1 month ago
- At least 18 years of age