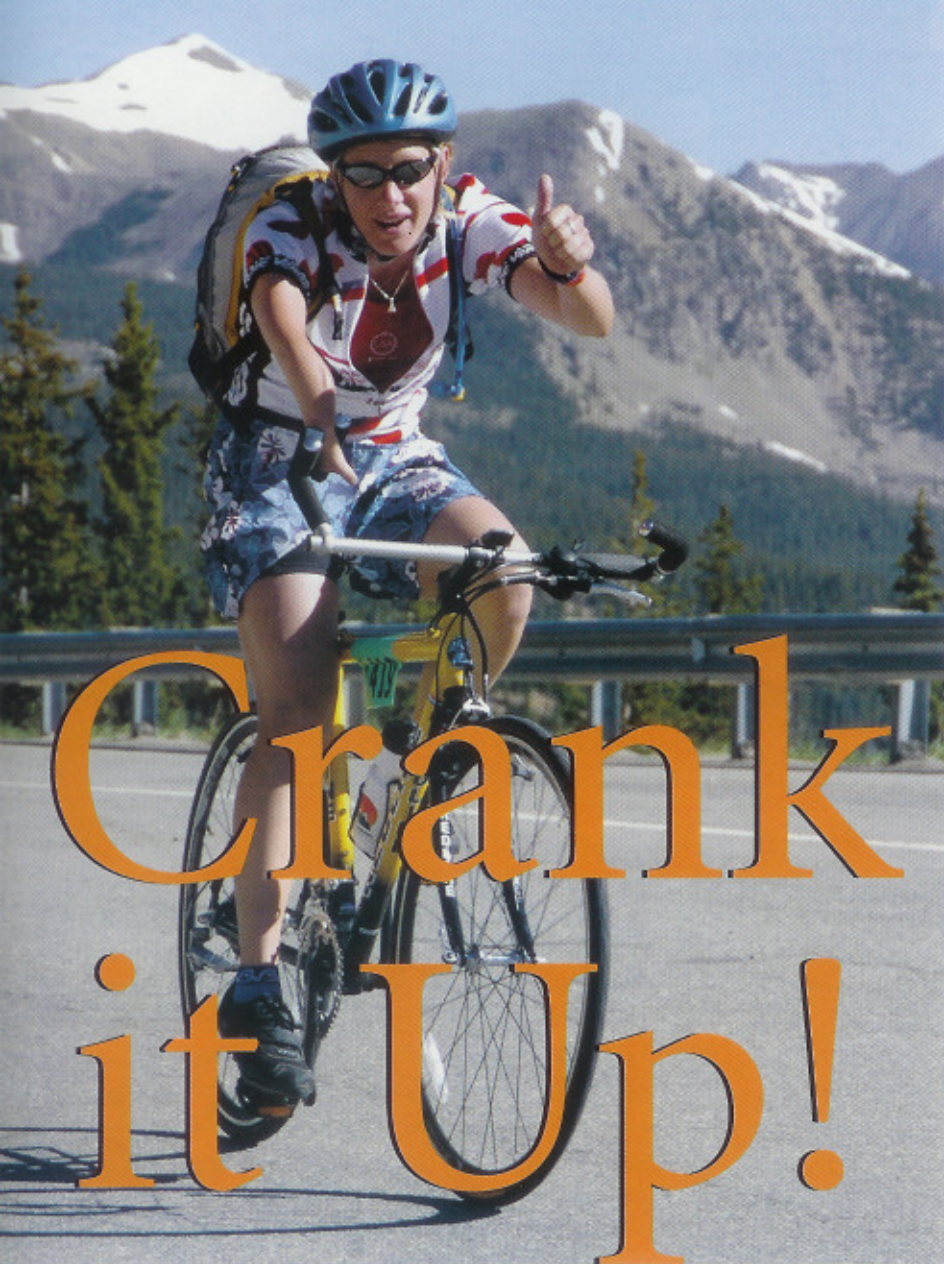


By: Sarah Schraad,
Adaptive Adventures

Cycling has become one of the most popular forms of outdoor recreation for people of all abilities. A great way to enjoy the outdoors, improve fitness and socialize with friends and family, a growing number of disabled sports programs have made the sport more accessible than ever before.



Crank it Up!

The beauty of adaptive cycling is that it is truly a multi-disability sport. With the help of advanced cycling technology, no matter what the impairment, there are endless alterations that can be made to all types of cycles to accommodate any individual's needs.

Start with a Test Drive!

Rick Leipold is an adaptive bike specialist at Creative Mobility in St. Charles, Illinois. The 50-year-old has used a wheelchair for 12 years now, the last nine fitting people with various disabilities for adaptive bikes. Leipold says the best way to get into cycling is to attend an adaptive event, such as an Adaptive Adventures or other Disabled Sports USA chapter camp or clinic. The Abilities Expos held in major U.S. cities throughout the year are also a good way to become informed about the sport.

"Test different standard and recumbent bikes, along with handcycles," he encourages. "Get fitted for a bike according to your individual needs." Bike shops and handcycle dealers are good places to test the equipment before buying as well.

The Internet is also a good source of information about adaptive cycling. There are numerous adaptive cycling websites, some that offer a chance to connect with other enthusiasts:

www.AdaptiveAdventures.org or
www.AdaptiveIRC.org

Featuring events and resources for all forms of adaptive cycling across the country.

www.ushf.org

Belongs to the U.S. governing body for handcycling.

<http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/handcyclists/>

An online discussion list that includes hundreds of handcyclists.

www.usparalympics.org

Primarily competitive opportunities through U.S. Paralympics.