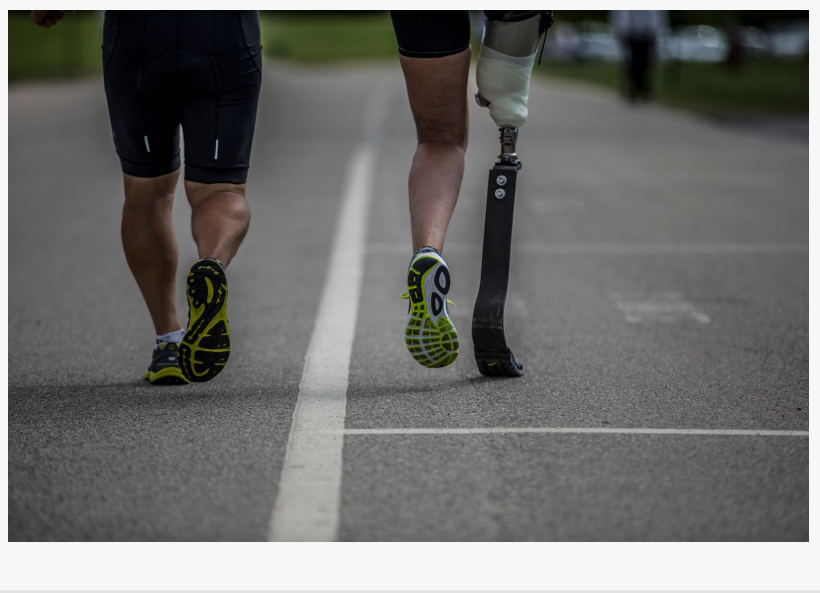


New Research Demonstrates the Power of Sport For People With Disabilities

University of Illinois study findings demonstrate the mental health and wellness benefits of adaptive sport

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- According to the Center for Disease Control, one in 4 U.S. adults – 61 million Americans, have a disability that impacts major life activities. Of those, 47 percent of people with a disability ages 18 to 64, reported they get no aerobic physical activity. For many of these Americans, the benefits that physical activity can have on their whole health are not widely understood.



Existing, independent, peer-reviewed academic research has previously demonstrated that adaptive sports has positive, lasting physical and psychological effects – yet more work is needed. In December 2020, Move United, the national leader in community adaptive sports, partnered with a research team at the University of Illinois Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism to conduct a study with over 1,000 individuals with a disability across the country. The study was conducted in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic and looked at the benefit of Move United programming.

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Our findings demonstrate the mental health and wellness benefits of adaptive sport for people with disabilities, especially during times when our daily lives are disrupted”

*University of Illinois Research
Lead Dr. Jules Woolf*

Research Lead Dr. Jules Woolf and his University of Illinois team recently published a paper in the Journal of Leisure Studies entitled "Disasters and catastrophes: the impact on

people with disabilities' leisure-time physical activity participation and associative mental health and well-being."

Some of the keys findings published in the journal included:

- The social aspect of being active is important.
- More simply, participating with others is important for people's mental health, especially when our lives are facing upheaval.
- Military veterans were more likely to be in the Heavily Impacted group that had poorer mental health and well-being indices, which is concerning given the challenges this population already experiences.
- For some people with disabilities, such as those with limb loss, continuing to be physically active during disasters may be more about motivating participation. In contrast, for others, such as those with TBI, tailored outreach and programming may be needed to overcome barriers to being active.

"Our findings demonstrate the mental health and wellness benefits of adaptive sport for people with disabilities, especially during times when our daily lives are disrupted. And importantly, it shows that people with different disabilities or different life experiences, such as veterans, experience these disruptions differently. That has major implications for adaptive sport programming and outreach," Woolf said.

To learn more about adaptive sports opportunities across the country, visit moveunitedsport.org.

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