

Fun And Fitness

Getting fit and staying active when you're visually impaired

LOS ANGELES SIGHT CENTER
741 North Vermont Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90029
323-663-1111
la@brailleinstitute.org

ORANGE COUNTY CENTER
527 North Dale Avenue
Anaheim, CA 92801
714-821-5000
oc@brailleinstitute.org

RANCHO MIRAGE CENTER
71251 Ramon Road
Rancho Mirage, CA 92270
760-321-1111
dc@brailleinstitute.org

SAN DIEGO CENTER
4555 Executive Drive
San Diego, CA 92121
858-452-1688
sd@brailleinstitute.org

SANTA BARBARA CENTER
2031 De La Vina Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93105
805-682-6222
sb@brailleinstitute.org

When you think about it, feeling fit and healthy and being able to take part in recreational and physical activities you enjoy, are at the core of what defines your quality of life. As you might expect, staying active and continuing to exercise is vital no matter what your level of sight, and many forms of exercise can be easily adapted for those with low vision. But you might be pleasantly surprised by just how wide the range of opportunities is when it comes to pursuing your favorite sports, games and pastimes – at both recreational and competitive levels. Some of that is a result of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which requires cultural and recreational venues to accommodate those with disabilities such as sight loss. But the main reason there is such a variety of options is thanks to the passion of thousands of people like you who are simply determined to continue doing what they love.

Here's a quick look at some possibilities to explore and some tips to consider as you continue to pursue your current favorite pastimes or move on to something new.

SPORTS AND EXERCISE

- **Keep on walking.** Many adults can achieve recommended amounts of physical activity mainly by walking – which has the added advantages of being a low-impact, weight-bearing activity, can be done practically anywhere, and takes no special equipment except for a sturdy pair of walking shoes. Many shopping malls even open early to give community residents an opportunity to walk indoors in comfort and safety – an important consideration for people with vision loss.
- **Join a health club.** Many health clubs and gyms offer special classes and have adaptations for exercisers with sight loss.
- **Take your pick of sports.** The list of sports that are commonly adapted for low vision athletes is amazingly long. Here's just a sampling: archery, cycling (tandem and solo) baseball, basketball, bowling, dancing, diving, fishing, football, golf, horseback riding, horseshoes, hunting, judo, rock climbing, powerlifting, sailing, scuba, skiing, swimming, track and field, table tennis, waterskiing, and wrestling.



*Empowering visually impaired
people to live fulfilling lives*

Fun And Fitness (continued)

- **Talk to someone in your situation.** Get in touch with an athlete who has vision loss and ask about adaptations that can be used in a particular sport. You can find these people by calling your local community center, through online searching and social networking, or by calling us at Braille Institute.
- **Do some research.** Start by doing some research on your sport of interest. Find out which clubs and associations that exist in your area have provisions for low vision athletes. There are also several national adapted sports organizations like the United States Association of Blind Athletes. Associations can provide information on adapting equipment for participants who are blind or have low vision, provide safety tips and link you to local groups and events. To find a specific sport, try searching online for the name of your sport plus the word "low vision" or "blind."
- **Remember to check in with your doctor.** Before undertaking an activity, talk to your medical doctor and eye doctor. Some eye conditions and medical conditions can be affected by athletic activity that includes bending, lifting, straining, rotating or pulling.

CARDS AND BOARD GAMES

- **Find a new version of your favorite board games.** A number of popular games including Monopoly, Scrabble, checkers, chess and dominos now come in large-print versions. For the serious Scrabble player, *The Official Scrabble Player's Dictionary* is even available in braille. You can adapt many of your favorite board games by adding contrasting colors, textures, and using tactile dice. For example, try gluing a circle of textured paper or fabric to the tops of either your red or black checkers.
- **Get a better view of your playing cards.** Large-print playing cards are the same size as standard cards and are available in stores or specialty product catalogs. You can also try using a card holder, which gives you an "extra hand" that spreads cards out for a clearer view and allows you to use a magnifier if you wish. Also, when playing a card game, you can simply ask the other players to identify the cards they are putting on the table, which is great mental exercise and will help you play your own cards independently.



Empowering visually impaired
people to live fulfilling lives

Fun And Fitness (continued)

- **Try a few new Bingo strategies.** Many Bingo venues have large-print or braille Bingo cards for the asking. If these are not available, playing fewer cards will help you keep track of your numbers more easily. Be sure to sit where the light is best, and bring your hand magnifier. Using contrasting Bingo markers that completely cover the numbers will help reduce visual clutter when you are scanning your cards during play.

All of the above games are available in our *Vistas* retail stores. *Vistas* stores are located in all five Braille Institute Regional Centers.

THEATER, MOVIES AND MORE

- **Check for “Audio Described Performances.”** Many performance venues provide patrons with stereo headsets to hear verbal descriptions of stage activities, and are often available for operas, plays, concerts and even political events.
- **Ask for large-print programs.** These can be provided upon request for many live performances.
- **Attend a preview session.** These are offered by some theaters for patrons with vision loss. During these sessions, staff meet with the audience prior to the performance and describe the plot and the stage activities that will take place throughout the performance.
- **Use low vision optical devices** such as small hand-held magnifiers and/or magnifiers with built-in lights (to aid in reading the program), small hand-held telescopes for spot viewing, spectacle-mounted telescopes, bioptic telescopes, or frame-mounted binoculars, all of which can provide a better view of a performance.
- **Rent or watch a closed-captioned movie.** These are offered along with audio descriptions in some cineplexes, and closed-captioned DVDs are available for a growing selection of movie titles at many libraries. In addition to renting, you can also borrow many titles from a local library at no charge.



*Empowering visually impaired
people to live fulfilling lives*

Fun And Fitness (continued)

- **Visit a museum.** Many museums offer audio tours for their exhibitions. These usually consist of a cassette player with a headset and a tape that describes items on display along with interesting background information about the artist, history and other insights. Some museums offer “touch galleries” or “touch tours.” And many offer interactive touch exhibits that you, your family and friends can enjoy together.

There are plenty of ways to get out and enjoy life. We can help get you started. We offer hundreds of free resources, classes and services. For more information, call us or visit us online.

Stay up to date on ways to help visually impaired people live fulfilling lives. Join our free online community at solutionsinsight.org.



*Empowering visually impaired
people to live fulfilling lives*

1-800-BRAILLE (272-4553) www.brailleinstitute.org