



Beach Accessibility: A Wheelchair User's Perspective

By: Steven Nguyen

Years ago, visiting the beach may have seemed impossible for someone who uses a wheelchair due to the difficulty of getting the chair through sand and water. However, thanks to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), many beaches have adapted to the needs of all their visitors. From special beach-chairs to dedicated sidewalks and mats for wheelchairs to navigate safely through the sand, beaches and developers are constantly finding creative ways to meet the needs and promote inclusion.

I hope that the few tips below will assist with your beach going experience and help make it easier and safer.

1. Do research and find rental wheelchair/equipment online – Along with businesses that offer equipment rentals for a fee, many organizations offer their equipment for the public to use for FREE. For example, The University of Southern Mississippi's Institute for Disability Studies Gulf Park has a lending library find out more [HERE](#).
2. Consider going for the electric powered beach chairs, rather than the manual ones. If you're like me, independence is a big part of who I am. An electrically powered chair gives me much more of that freedom.

The manual beach chair requires that someone pushes you around.

3. Bring a good pair of gloves. This will protect your hands from calluses and contact with the metal hand rim, especially when it is hot.
4. Do not forget your sunscreen, hats, sunglasses, and/or your preferred sun protection.
5. Stay hydrated!

Whatever you do, don't let the wheelchair get in the way of you having a great time!

For more information, visit these links:

Travel Channel's Best Beaches for Wheelchair Users: <http://www.travelchannel.com/interests/beaches/photos/best-beaches-for-wheelchair-users>

Shepherd's Center Blog: <http://news.shepherd.org/accessibility-at-the-beach/>



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