

ROLLING INSPIRATION

ISSUE 1 2025

The leading magazine for people with mobility impairments

Dedicated disability radio

Adding flair to advocacy



Smoother daily routine
Practical steps

Drive for inclusion
Adaptive golf empowers

EVENTS CALENDAR 2025



ADAPTIVE SPORTS FUND

NO LIMITS. JUST LIFE!

ADAPTIVE GO-KARTING - 8th March



ADAPTIVE MOUNTAIN BIKING - 5th April



ADAPTIVE GOLF - 10th May



ADAPTIVE SNOW-SKIING - 24-27th July



ADAPTIVE PADDLE - 9th August



ADAPTIVE SAILING - 6th September



ADAPTIVE ROCK CLIMBING - 4th October



ADAPTIVE ARCHERY - 1st November



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Times are a changing

A new year brings changes to QASA

The 2025 year is already whizzing along. We are all familiar with the saying “time flies”. So true that is. Time is the most valuable asset that we have as individuals. Let’s use it wisely. Any time not used productively or wisely is gone.

“Opportunity lost” is a term so frequently used and “opportunity gained” seems less frequent. Time is the one asset that if it’s gone then it’s gone. It is not a stock item that you can reuse.

Carpe Diem is often referred to in conversations and its meaning is to make the most of the present time and give little thought to the future. Adopt this concept and you will find how productive it is.


I recently read *Time to Think* by Nancy Kline which explores the most effective way of thinking and acting. This book had a huge impact on me and is well worth a read. It changed the way I strategize and make decisions.

QASA will be setting some strategic goals for 2025 and already we have assessed some of our projects. We are more committed than ever to focus on the impact of each of our projects rather than the outcome.

We are making the changes. We have adopted the concept of “corner-to-corner” with the aim of ensuring that our reach is countrywide, and not only in our formal established regional associations.

If there is a project that you feel we should consider, that would speak to our mission statement of “all quadriplegics will live their lives to the full potential”, please tell us about it.

My final note is that QASA is again on the lookout for a General Manager. We have a job specification available in the QASA office (secretary@qasa.co.za) and the QASA Management Board would like to cast the net for the right person as far as possible.

Have a wonderful 2025. You can look forward to a great publication this year. 



Ari Seirlis is the former CEO of the QuadPara Association of South Africa and now serves as the Treasurer of QASA. He is also, presently, a member of the Presidential Working Group on Disability. He is a wheelchair user and disability activist. Ari has recently published his biography, which can be found at www.wheelsoffire.co.za.

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Generous support from The Cape 1000

QASA was once again named a beneficiary by The Cape 1000. Owner of Super Car Lifestyle and organiser of The Cape 1000, Ross Crichton has been a long-standing benefactor of the organisation.

“Super Car Lifestyle has been organising car events and tours for over 20 years,” shares Vanessa Crichton, the event organiser. “We felt the time was right for an internationally recognised rally in the Western Cape and, having supported QASA since our first event in 2003, it was only fitting.” QASA shares this tremendous honour with The Motorsport Legends Benevolent Funds.


The Cape 1000 hosted its fourth edition from March 16 to 21. Classic, modern and supercars travelled through the most breathtaking and thrilling drives in the Western Cape from Stellenbosch to Hermanus and Tulbagh. Vanessa shares: “The passes are always the best. Notably, this year is the Clarence Drive and Bain’s Kloof Pass.”

The aim is to run the event for many more years. As Vanessa notes: “The big achievement will be reaching our 10-year anniversary. The



challenge is setting new routes each year to try keep it interesting for returning participants and, at the same time, give new participants the best roads to drive.”


We wish The Cape 1000 all the best with its future races and hope to continue our partnership for many more years. Their support make it possible to continue empowering our members to live their lives to their full potential. The team at The Cape 1000 encourages QASA members to reach for positivity.

“Always stay strong no matter the challenge. With the right positivity anything is possible,” Vanessa concludes. 

New chairs with continued SFF support

The continued support from Strategic Fuel Fund (SFF) has empowered several QASA members with much-needed assistive devices. Most recently, Sajini Mboyiya received a new folding powered wheelchair.



“I really want to thank QASA and SFF for giving me this beautiful electric wheelchair. My life is so good now because I can travel even with a car because I can fold my wheelchair now,” he shares. 



ABOVE: The Ackerman Foundation made a generous donation to QASA.

FOLLOW QASA ON SOCIAL MEDIA



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QuadPara Association



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@Quadpara

Dedicated disability radio adding flair to advocacy

With disability often overlooked by mainstream media, one radio station hopes to be a platform to advocate for and empower people with disabilities



Charismatic radio personality Mr TAP (Tebogo Poopedi) introduces his guest for the day as production manager Baba Signal (Buhlebenkosi Mkhize) blasts horns to celebrate. The focus is on disability and inclusion – a core mission for Skills Village Radio, an online radio station based out of Soweto, Gauteng. The duo established the online radio station in 2022.

“We have recognised that traditional media often underrepresents or misrepresents the experiences of individuals with disabilities,” says Tebogo.

“Our station aims to fill this gap by offering a space where these voices can be heard directly ... and to provide a platform for skills development and community engagement,” he adds.

Buhlebenkosi adds: “Mr TAP (Tebogo) had a dream of starting a radio station that caters for people with disabilities. I was included as my specialty is sound design.”

“We both sat down and worked on the vision of how we can achieve that dream and make it a possibility.”

CHASING THE DREAM

Armed with a dream and lots of drive, the duo started Skills Village Radio with the goal of

creating an inclusive community. Tebogo shares: “As Skills Village Radio, our hope is to leave a profound and lasting impact on both the disability community and the wider public.”

“Specifically, for people with disabilities, we hope to provide a sense of agency, self-worth, and the confidence to pursue their passions and advocate for their rights.”

“

For people with disabilities, we hope to provide a sense of agency, self-worth and the confidence to pursue their passions.

“For the community at large, we hope to increase their understanding of the challenges and achievements of people with disabilities, and a shift away from prejudice and stereotypes.”

“We hope the community can recognise the contributions that people with disabilities make to society and the importance of valuing diverse perspectives,” he continues.

“Ultimately, Skills Village Radio hopes to inspire a society where people with disabilities are fully included, valued, and empowered to reach their full potential,” Tebogo adds.

The founders are an example of what can truly be achieved with just a dream as both were new to the radio industry and lacked some of the skills needed to run a station. They learned on-the-job.

“As I had never worked for a radio station before, I had to learn how





LEFT: Tebogo Poopedi (Mr TAP), co-founder, station manager and presenter at Skills Village Radio.

ABOVE: Buhlebenkosi Mkhize (Baba Signal), co-founder, production manager and presenter at Skills Village Radio.

things are done in terms of radio audio design, live streaming and presenting,” Buhlebenkosi shares.

TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION

Paying it forward, the team now shares the knowledge that they have gained over the years by offering hands-on training in radio broadcasting, production and related media skills for those who would like to pursue a career in radio or journalism.

As words of encouragement, Buhlebenkosi notes: “People should avail themselves in spaces that will enable them to grow within any aspired field.

“If there are no opportunities, they should always opt for volunteering as they will learn a lot about that particular field. This will get them ready to do their best when that opportunity arises.”

“Everyone is destined for greatness regardless their race, age, disability and gender. If we do it together, it becomes even better than expected,” he adds.

A TEAM EFFORT

While Buhlebenkosi and Tebogo are the founding fathers, they have a dynamic team of presenters who assist with creating impactful and entertaining content.

Princess Sibanda, the human resources manager and presenter of the *Health and Awareness* show at Skills Village Radio, has always been passionate about disability rights.

“When I learned about the station, I was drawn to its mission of promoting inclusivity and empowerment. Joining the team allowed me to use my voice to tackle critical issues affecting people with disabilities while connecting with a broader audience,” she shares.

“Radio is a powerful medium for fostering connection, education, and awareness. It allows us to transcend barriers and create a space where diverse stories and perspectives can flourish.”

“I’m passionate about this work because it challenges stereotypes, informs listeners, and inspires action,” she adds.

The QuadPara Association of South Africa (QASA) is a regular guest on the *Health and Awareness* show with a weekly interview on Tuesdays at 10 AM.

Presenter of the *Inclusive Insights* segment on Skills Village Radio and head of creative writing and social media, Simfisile Mazibuko is passionate about radio as it allows the presenters to express themselves without prejudice.

"I'm passionate about radio because it is a medium that allows expression in the purest form. It allows people to share their most honest selves without perceptions being built by the first impressions of appearance," she explains. Her segment was inspired by her own experiences as a person with a disability.

"What inspired *Inclusive Insights* is my passion for inclusivity – not only of people with disabilities, but also of the allies without disabilities within the disability community. It was inspired by wanting to live in a truly inclusive and diverse world," she says.

PURSUING PASSION

Princess shares some wisdom for those who are pursuing their passions, and specifically have an interest in radio: "Believe in the power of your voice and your ability to make a difference."

"For those interested in radio, remember that authenticity is key. It's your story and passion that will resonate with your audience. For individuals with disabilities, never let societal biases limit your aspirations. Embrace your uniqueness, seek out opportunities, and remain open to growth," she adds.

Princess encourages people to move outside of their comfort zones, as she did within


her role as human resources manager, as this can open doors to personal and professional growth.

Simfisile's message to other people with disabilities is to remember the uniqueness that they have to offer.

"No two human beings share the same fingerprint pattern. So, everything that you touch, you have left your unique mark on. Let's make it a goal that everything we touch has a glimmer of positivity," she shares.

In February, the radio station celebrated its third year on air. Tebogo reflects: "The success of the station is a testament to the dedication and talent of the individuals involved. They continue to inspire and remind us that when people are given the opportunity to share their stories, the impact is profound and transformative."

You can support the radio station through offering financial assistance, volunteering your time or simply tuning in to the thought-provoking discussion.

"Skills Village Radio is more than just a radio station. It's a powerful example of how media can be used to promote social inclusion and empower marginalised communities," Tebogo concludes. 



ABOVE: Princess Sibanda is the human resources manager and presents the *Health and Awareness* show.

RIGHT: Simfisile Mazibuko presents the *Inclusive Insights* show and is the head of creative writing and social media.



Warrior with a difference



What first seemed like a disadvantage that would prevent Douglas Bader from fighting for the British Royal Air Force, turned into his greatest strength during battle

In May of 1940, Germany invaded France. By the end of the month, British and French forces were driven to the beaches of Dunkirk. A sea-rescue evacuation plan, Operation Dynamo, was implemented by the British Navy.

With the harbour at Dunkirk destroyed, large naval vessels remained in deeper waters and small flat-bottomed boats transferred the troops to the warships.

Even private boat owners assisted in the evacuation of 338 226 British, French, Dutch and Belgian troops. This operation was heavily attacked by the German Luftwaffe and defended by the Royal Air Force (RAF).

In the months that followed, Britain defended against large-scale attacks by the German air force, which was dubbed The Battle of Britain.

This is where Douglas Bader enters the story. He was part of the aerial defence at Dunkirk and intensely involved in the Battle of Britain.

During the nine days of the evacuation, he was able to destroy three enemy aircraft and damage a fourth without any damage to himself. In the Battle of Britain, Douglas was credited with destroying at least ten enemy aircraft. In one skirmish his Hurricane aircraft was badly shot up, but he managed to land safely.

WHEN LUCK RUNS OUT

Douglas joined the RAF in 1928 and by 1930, he was airborne with a Bristol Bulldog, an aircraft known for its instability at low speeds. Nevertheless, Douglas loved doing aerobatics even when regulations forbade it.

However, in 1931, Douglas' luck ran out. While performing some low-level acrobatics (apparently in response to a dare) the tip of his left wing touched the ground, and he crashed. He was rushed to hospital where both his legs were amputated; one above knee and the other below the knee. Douglas became a bilateral amputee.

After a long and difficult recovery, he was fitted with two prosthetic legs. He was later able to play golf, dance and drive an adapted car. In 1932, he was given the opportunity to fly an Avro 504 aircraft, which he piloted successfully.

However, the RAF refused to take him back. Civilian employment did not suit Douglas and with the tensions rising in pre-war Europe, Douglas repeatedly appealed to the RAF to re-employ him. They finally considered favourably, but as ground crew only.

PERSEVERANCE WINS OUT

Douglas' opportunity to fly again came when an Air Vice Marshall personally endorsed him and requested a Flying School to assess his capabilities. He passed and progressed through refresher courses.

Despite his injuries and subsequent disability, he had not lost his daredevil instinct. During one refresher flight, he could not resist the temptation to fly his plane upside down at the low altitude of 180 meters above the ground! In January of 1940, he was posted to a fighter pilot squadron.

Interestingly, the same disability that kept him from returning to the air force helped him to excel. When planes go into tight turns, the gravity forces blood from the head into the legs, which result in pilots blacking out. Because of his amputation, Douglas was able to take his plane through much tighter turns than the enemy thus gaining an advantage.

PRISONER OF WAR

In 1941, Douglas was promoted to Wing Commander and led his wing of fighter pilots on several successful "sorties". The same year, his plane was damaged, and Douglas bailed out. He was captured and interred in Colditz Castle for over three years. During that time the Germans treated him with great respect!



MAIN PHOTO: Douglas Bader. Photo sourced from [Wikipedia](#).

TOP LEFT: Douglas climbing into a plane with his prosthesis. Photo sourced from [This Day in Aviation](#).

TOP RIGHT: Douglas in later life playing golf. Photo sourced from [Media Store House](#).

When he bailed out of his plane, Douglas lost one of his prosthetic legs. The German General in charge contacted Douglas' squadron and offered them safe passage to fly in a replacement prosthesis. An RAF bomber flew in and dropped the prosthesis by parachute.

Douglas remained a prisoner of war until his liberation in April 1945. His stay in Colditz Castle was eventful to say the least.

After the war, Douglas Bader was given the honour of leading a victory flypast of three hundred aircraft over London in June 1945. He remained with the RAF, but he was given a training post which he became dissatisfied with. He retired in July 1946 and joined the Shell Company where flying light aircraft was a part of his job.

Douglas died of a heart attack in 1982. His memory remains; that of a man who overcame profound difficulties to become a national hero, who served his country with distinction, never giving up on his disability instead using it to his advantage in the tight turns of aerial combat. **R**



George Louw qualified as a medical doctor, but, due to a progressing spastic paralysis, chose a career in health administration. The column is named after Ida Hlongwa, who worked as caregiver for Ari Seirlis for 20 years. Her charm, smile, commitment, quality care and sacrifice set the bar incredibly high for the caregiving fraternity.

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Complete
guide to
accessible
travel



Mandy Latimore shares her years of experience travelling as a wheelchair user in this travel deep dive

Travelling as a person with a disability need not be the daunting prospect that most people think it is. With the right attitude, lots of planning, and the ability to “make a plan” (adapt to the situation), travel for everyone can be great fun.

As a person with a disability for the past 45 years, I’ve travelled the world and done some weird and wonderful things. It can be done! One needs to also be aware that even with the most careful plans, things do go wrong.

You need to be resourceful and sometimes just downright bossy to get your way! Yet, you will probably come across many people who are extremely eager to assist in any way they can.

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You need to be resourceful and sometimes just downright bossy to get your way!

When you decide to travel, first you need to research the destination intensively. Do some research on the internet or talk to people who have been there already. The more you know about a place, the more confident you will be in your travels.

Most hotels have e-mail addresses that you can use to enquire about specific needs, such as wheelchair friendly rooms with roll-in showers.

Know your needs, but also what you would be able to settle for should the suppliers not have the exact facilities that you require, or any facilities to cater for people with disabilities.

When planning your holiday, there are a number of factors which need to be put together in order to decide on the best value for money holiday possible.

BUDGET AND COMPANY

Budget is the most important factor. The amount of money that you have to spend will decide how far you can travel, which mode of transport you will use, and for how long you can be away.

Similarly, the number of people you are travelling with will determine which modes of transport and what type of accommodation you choose.

If you have a family or are travelling with a caregiver, you might choose a hotel with meals included or perhaps a self-catering unit with multiple bedrooms to accommodate everyone.

DESTINATION

When you know what budget you have available and who will be accompanying you, you can start looking at various areas that you are interested in visiting.

Do you want to relax at the beach or in the bush? Do you want to see a city with lots of sightseeing opportunities? Or are you more interested in relaxing while your kids rush about? Do you want to cruise or be land-based?

Once you have narrowed down your options, it is time to make a decision. Research each destination before travelling so that you can know what you want to do or experience on the trip.

Make sure that you have enough time allocated in each place so that you can enjoy all the sites and places that you want to visit.

Make use of tour guides in places where you do not speak the language. You get much

TRAVEL CHECKLIST



Have you thought of everything?



Budget

How much will you spend on the trip? How far will you travel? How long will you be away?



Travel companion

Who will be joining the trip? Do they need their own room? How will you all get to your destination?



Destination

Where do you want to go? What do you want to do when you are there? What do you want to see?



Accessibility

Are the facilities accessible? If not, can you compromise on anything? Have you phoned to double check?



The paper work

Have you checked the expiry date of your passport, driver's and vehicle licence? Are they valid? Do they need to be renewed?



Visa requirements

Have you checked what visa (if any) is needed? What are the requirements? Do you need any medications?



Travel insurance

Do you have travel insurance? Does it cover cancellations, loss or damage of items and medical cover?



Foreign currency

Have you converted some of your money into the currency of the country that you are visiting?



more out of your trip when a local gives you information about the city or sites.

Be sure to check the climate before you leave so that you can pack the correct clothing. Ensure that your caregiver, friends or family pack comfortable walking shoes for the trip!

CHECK THE ACCESSIBILITY

It is advised to double check whether the places that you plan on visiting are accessible. An internet search for "wheelchair friendly" establishments is the first step. Then, go to the individual webpages to see if their facilities do meet your needs.

If you like the venue, give them a call to confirm the facilities that you need are available, for example twin beds, an inter-leading room or roll-in shower. Also ensure that you can move between your room and the general areas like restaurants and facilities easily.



If you like the venue, give them a call to confirm the facilities that you need are available.

GETTING ALL THE PAPER WORK

Before a trip, it is important to check the expiry dates of the travel documents you need for yourself and your car. Passports, driver's licence and vehicle licences all have expiry dates. It is much cheaper to renew these documents than reapplying.

For example, if your driver's licence expires, you will have to re-take your eye test. If your vehicle licence expires, you have to put it through the roadworthy test again. All at a higher cost than renewing.

MEET THE REQUIREMENTS

Please check the requirements of the visa that you are applying for well ahead of

time. There might be medical requirements like yellow fever inoculation or anti-malaria medications or practises. Sometimes, there need to be arranged up to two weeks prior to departure.

SOME INSURANCE FOR EASE OF MIND

It is highly recommended to have travel insurance even when travelling local as holidays are usually quite expensive. If the holiday needs to be cancelled for health reasons, then at least you will be able to get your money back.


It is imperative to have travel insurance when travelling outside of one's country. This should include general cover cancellation, curtailment and delays, loss of items like your luggage or cash and documents, which

can easily get stolen or lost, as well as comprehensive medical cover.

CONVERTING TO A FOREIGN CURRENCY

Once you've booked your trip and made sure your passport is valid, you have to arrange foreign currency.

There are various ways of obtaining foreign currency such as banks, specific companies (some even offer the service to your door) or the Bureaux de Change. You can organise cash, traveller's cheques, cash passports or allocate an amount on your existing credit card.

For a more in-depth look into everything accessible travel, download the [full booklet here](#). 



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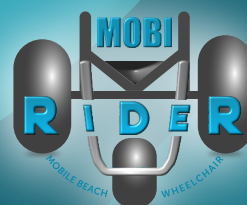
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Quality hospital care possible for wheelchair users

Greater accessibility for wheelchair users is needed in hospitals. Fortunately, one hospital has shown what could be possible

Several hospital visits recently have me thinking about the accessibility that should prevail within hospitals as that most patients are not able to move around easily and have difficulty completing their daily tasks.

Most private hospitals have two or four bed wards, each with their own bathroom. However, these are not really wheelchair accessible. It is difficult to enter, especially with a drip stand, and once inside, the layout does not allow much space for moving about.

The basin is in a large vanity with no knee clearance. The toilet is at the standard height of 43 cm from the floor (thus not raised), and there are no grab rails. Most often there is a bath with a shower over it which precludes any access for mobility impaired persons.

This means that patients with mobility impairments end up having to wash and clean their teeth using a basin on the adjustable over-bed table.

This was my experience at one, particular hospital. There was an accessible wet room in the ward, but this was only brought to my attention on the day of my departure. Additionally, the shower cubicle did not allow space for my wheelchair to turn, and the shower seat was not compliant.

Even when there is accessibility, it is lacking with staff's poor communication or lack of training only making the situations in hospitals for wheelchair users feel a lot more dire.

However, there are some hospitals doing it right. A recent operation that required a

specialist hospital, gave me an opportunity to experience what the gold standard of accessibility in hospitals for people with mobility impairments might look like.

On arriving at the Urology Hospital in Pretoria, I was directed by security to the accessible parking area in front of the hospital. The security also offered assistance with getting my wheelchair out of the car and assisted with the door.

Once inside, the admission desks were all at accessible levels with staff immediately knowing which room to allocate to me. They mentioned that there was a specific room dedicated to people using a wheelchair.

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There was a specific room dedicated to people using a wheelchair.

On arrival at the ward, it was such a pleasure to open the bathroom door and find a complete spacious wet room with a step-free shower and high toilet with grab rails and wall mounted basin. The heights and placements weren't all correct, but it absolutely was usable.

While the staff lacked training in how to lift or roll a person with mobility impairments, they were happy to learn in what ways I needed assistance.

Post operation, in ICU, the staff again provided exceptional care with constant checks on my pressure points with a vascular support hose placed on my legs to assist.

As my abdominal muscles were cut, I was not able to transfer as I usually do. The staff



MAIN PHOTO: The Urology Hospital in Pretoria is a good example of what is possible with the correct approach to inclusion.


ABOVE AND RIGHT: The wet room at the Urology Hospital is spacious and very accessible.

arranged for me to have a physiotherapist from the nearby spinal rehabilitation hospital come through to teach me how to use a transfer board.

Surely, all hospitals should have this same training and mind set. Perhaps there should be some guidelines or protocols drawn up for the industry.

If there are other establishments like this one that provides quality accessibility and care, a list should be made available so that wheelchair users can make informed choices!

If you've recently had a hospital visit, we'd love to hear from you – the good and the ugly.

You can reach out to the *Rolling Inspiration* team at rollinginspiration@qasa.co.za or complete our survey on hospitals [here](#). 



Mandy Latimore is a consultant in the disability sector in the fields of travel and access.

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Hospital companion to ensure quality care

With the QASA Hospital Pre-admission Form, you can easily communicate your needs to hospital staff

Hospital visits can often be nerve wrecking as you leave the comfort of your home for a strange environment where you are often in a vulnerable state. For wheelchair users who require assistance, it can be an especially stressful, particularly when the hospital staff are not well informed on the assistance that you require.

QASA has introduced its Hospital Pre-admission Form, which helps you communicate your needs with hospital staff to ensure the best care possible.


From dressing routines to pressure ulcer management, the form is packed with information that helps staff provide the right care without any guesswork. Think of it as a personalised guide for the nursing staff to offer the support you need.

The form has been updated to be more concise and user-friendly. It can be downloaded, completed and stored until your next

hospital visit. It can be downloaded from the [QASA website](#).

It is recommended to discuss the form in detail with your attending nurse. This can also offer an opportunity to confirm whether there is accessible bathroom facilities and highlight the important tasks that you need assistance with, for example, being turned at night to prevent pressure ulcers, especially during a longer stay.

Remember to escalate any concerns about your care to the ward matron. George Louw shared some advice on taking action in his article "[Hospital Admission Challenges and SCI](#)" available on our website.

With this small but powerful tool, patients can advocate for their individual needs while empowering hospital staff to provide the care that's both effective and compassionate. Be sure to keep your hospital companion handy for your next hospital visit. 



UROLOGY HOSPITAL AMONG FIRST IN SA TO OFFER LATEST TECHNOLOGY IN BPH – HOPE TO SA MEN

As men age, many experience a condition called benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), a non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate gland that can lead to bothersome urinary symptoms. Affecting over 94 million men worldwide over the age of 40, BPH is an escalating urological health issue that impacts quality of life and contributes to rising healthcare costs. Fortunately, new treatment options like Rezūm Water Vapour Therapy offer hope for effective relief without the need for invasive surgery or long-term medication.

What Is Rezūm Water Vapour Therapy?

Rezūm Water Vapour Therapy is a minimally invasive treatment option for BPH that uses steam to shrink and remove excess prostate tissue, relieving pressure on the urethra and improving urinary flow. This innovative procedure has been shown to significantly reduce symptoms associated with BPH, such as frequent urination, urgency, and weak urine flow, without the side effects often associated with medications or traditional surgical treatments.

A five-year clinical trial demonstrated that Rezūm Water Vapour Therapy could treat BPH symptoms effectively and provide long-lasting relief. Importantly, it does so with minimal risk, fewer complications, and without compromising sexual function—a key concern for many men facing prostate treatments.

Benefits of Rezūm Water Vapour Therapy

1. **Improved Urinary Symptoms:** Many patients report significant relief from BPH symptoms within weeks of the procedure. Common improvements include reduced urinary frequency, less urgency, and improved urine flow.
2. **Minimally Invasive:** Unlike traditional surgery, Rezūm Water Vapour Therapy requires no incisions and has a shorter recovery time.
3. **No Sexual Side Effects:** Rezūm Water Vapour Therapy does not interfere with erectile function or sexual desire. Patients can maintain their quality of life without the worry of sexual dysfunction.
4. **Long-Lasting Results:** Clinical studies show that the benefits of Rezūm Water Vapour Therapy can last for years, with many patients experiencing relief for up to two years or more.
5. **Rapid Recovery:** Most patients experience minimal discomfort after the procedure and can resume normal activities within just a few days, with few requiring a catheter afterward.

This steam treatment targets the excess prostate tissue, causing it to shrink and be gradually reabsorbed by the body. As the prostate shrinks, the pressure on the urethra is reduced, alleviating common BPH symptoms such as urinary frequency, urgency, and weak urine flow. The procedure typically takes less than 30 minutes. Most patients can return to normal activities within a few days, and there is usually no need for a catheter post-procedure.

For more information visit our website
urology.co.za or email urology@urology.co.za

 **UROLOGY HOSPITAL**
We care about you

Protecting disability rights by international standards



South Africa is finally taking steps to align with international laws protecting disability rights

For some time now, civil society has been pushing for a dedicated disability act to protect the rights of persons with disabilities. The South African Law Reform Commission (SALRC) is spearheading the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) into national legislation.

South Africa signed the CRPD and its Operational Protocol back in 2007, committing to align local policies with the international standards. The SALRC's Project 148 aims to fulfil this commitment made over a decade ago by incorporating the CRPD into South African law.

To ensure and facilitate meaningful public participation, the process involves extensive research, issue papers and discussion documents. The goal is to ensure everyone gets a chance to have their say.

In 2021, the SALRC published the Project 148, Issue Paper 33. It outlined the key challenges, defined the scope of investigation, and invited public comment. Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) actively engaged and submitted their responses.

Currently, a second round of public engagement is underway with the release of [Discussion Paper 163 under Project 148](#). The proposed legislation, titled the Protection and Promotion of Persons with Disabilities Act X of 2024, aims to provide comprehensive legal protections for persons with disabilities.

Aligning this proposed legislation with existing laws, such as the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act and the Employment Equity Act, is essential to ensure coherence in South African legal framework.

Civil society is in the process of drafting and submitting comments. The deadline for submissions was extended to 30 April 2025.

However, the OPDs has raised concerns regarding the accessibility of the draft bill, emphasising the need for inclusive formats to ensure full participation. The ongoing dialogue between stakeholders and policymakers remains crucial in shaping an effective and inclusive disability law for South Africa.

This article was compiled with assistance from Melanie Lubbe, South African Disability Alliance. [R](#)

SASCA Congress returns in May

With the bi-annual SASCA Congress returning in May 2025, we take a closer look at what attendees can look forward to



The Southern African Spinal Cord Association (SASCA) aims to inform healthcare professionals and policy makers to promote good rehabilitation practices. This is done by offering a platform for research in spinal cord injury (SCI) rehabilitation to be shared, and networking opportunities for medical professionals, service providers, academic institutions and government.

“SASCA is devoted to real research and finding real answers for SCI,” shares Melanie Harding, the current SASCA chairperson. “We believe we should be at the top of our field and offer the best the world has to offer, but in a proven effective way and thus the importance of good ethical research and educating the professionals and consumers alike.”

“We also like to keep the Southern African professionals abreast of all the latest research on SCI from around the world,” she continues. The Congress is open to any international visitors and will include several noteworthy international speakers.


“We have amazing overseas speakers, leaders in the field, attending including Dr Brian Kwon from ICord in Vancouver and Dr Halaluya Moshi from Tanzania as well as Dr Any Haig and Dr Briann Mkiva. All of these are experts in the field of SCI and rehabilitation

will share their wealth of experience with us,” Melanie explains.

This year, attendees can look forward to topics on: Exploring male intimacy after SCI; Neurochemical biomarkers of acute SCI (research and clinical implications); Enhancing patient outcomes through team integration; Creativity as a means to building a fulfilling life post SCI; and physical trauma and life with SCI in African resource constrained areas.

“These topics look at new research, and how it can translate into new practice. It looks at team work, which is key in SCI rehab,” Melanie comments. “It also looks at sexuality, which is a crucial part of all our lives and especially for persons with SCI.”

The 2025 SASCA Congress will take place in Cape Town from 22 to 24 May in conjunction with the South African Spine Society (for a second year). You can register for the event on the [official Congress website](#) with early bird (discounted) registration closing on 7 April.

SASCA members receive further discounts when registering. It is free to become a [SASCA member](#) and membership is open to any individual with an interest in spinal cord injury even if they are not working in the field. 



Consistency key to boundaries

Boundaries are important to offering children structure and guidance, but consistency with boundaries can be a challenge

Parenting is one of the hardest jobs in the world. For those of us who have children with disabilities, there are often additional challenges. For many of us parents and caregivers of children with disabilities, we are exhausted and at times can feel overwhelmed.

We may have other children and multiple competing commitments and roles. Along with being a “pharmacist” (giving our children medication), a “nurse” (handling the bowl and bladder routines), and “therapist” (doing physio and suctioning fluids), we are also still a mom, dad, and partner!

Despite the challenges, it is important to teach our children boundaries. We share some tips on implementing boundaries; however, as disability is such an individual experience, offering a “one solution will fix all” is not helpful. The tips are just suggestions. You have the “insider knowledge” of what will

work best for your child. You know your child best and should always go with your gut feel.

TEMPTATION TO CAVE

Parenting a child with a disability can be tough and our children do not come with manuals. Sometimes it is just easier to “give in” than dealing with the consequences of massive meltdown. I curse the marketing company that encouraged supermarkets to add a ‘temptation ally’ of sweets at checkouts.

We can also feel isolated and judged so may take the easier option than deal with the consequences of saying no, especially in public. However, we have an important role in shaping our children’s understanding of limits, respect, and self-discipline, which can be done through setting suitable and appropriate boundaries.

Some parents and caregivers let things slip because of our children’s disabilities.

We sometimes overcompensate or make excuses for negative behaviour with our children with disabilities, yet do not apply the same exceptions to our other children, for example. This can cause friction and resentment between our children which isn't healthy.

BASICS OF BOUNDARIES

By giving children suitable boundaries, we are providing structure and guidance that can help them navigate the sometimes difficult, unpredictable and complicated world.

If children feel secure and know what will happen next, they feel safe and some of seemingly "behavioural issues" may fall away or lessen in intensity.

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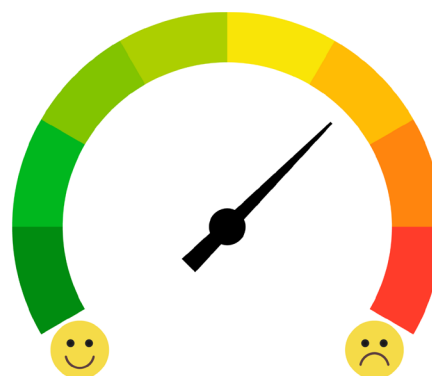
By giving children suitable boundaries, we are providing structure and guidance.

For example, if our children know that they won't get a chocolate every time you go to the shops, and you can consistently say no (and depending on their age and ability, explain why), they will eventually stop asking as no remains no.

However, as a mom of a child with a disability, I know that this is not easy and the temptation just to buy the chocolate and avoid the outburst followed by staring customers is so huge.

I also know that for some parents who have a child with certain disabilities or health conditions that may make understanding concepts difficult and the boundaries that you put in place may need to be adapted or take longer to implement.

There are differing types of boundaries including physical, emotional and behavioural boundaries.



ABOVE: A feelings chart or barometer can be helpful to teach your child about emotional boundaries.

PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES

These involve teaching your child what is appropriate and inappropriate touch and respecting other people's personal space. This can be tricky especially when our children may need physical assistance including lifting, transferring, washing and feeding.

In addition, some of our children might not understand what is appropriate so providing simple and clear explanations at their level is important.

Other times, it is up to us as parents to ensure that we set physical boundaries with friends, family members, as well as other support structures like facilitators or carers to keep our children safe as they may be extra vulnerable.

EMOTIONAL BOUNDARIES

These involve respecting and acknowledging our feelings and emotions. This can include teaching our children how to express their feelings in a suitable and healthy manner, again understanding that these might be different from a child without disabilities.

You might want to use feelings charts or barometers which allow our children who might find verbal communication challenging to point to the feeling they identify with.

For example, understanding that our child might be moving from a green colour or calm state on a feelings barometer to an orange can help them see what calming strategies to use so that they avoid reaching red and having an outburst.

The calming strategy might include moving to a different space or removing the trigger (such as loud noise, bright lights, over stimulating activities) so that the child will move from an orange back to green.

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The calming strategy might include moving to a different space or removing the trigger.

BEHAVIOURAL BOUNDARIES

These are often the most difficult boundaries to teach and implement. Here we need to set up expectations for both the behaviour we want as well as the consequences of the behaviour not taking place. For example, these could be rules about what time we need to go to sleep, or how much time we allow our children to spend on a device.

It is important that the child understands what is appropriate and what is not. For some children, this is very difficult, so I encourage you to use concrete examples that have occurred previously.

It is also crucial that you clearly explain the consequences beforehand so there is predictability. When our child has had an outburst for example, they are emotional and will not be able to see things objectively or rationalise.

As mentioned earlier, this is often really challenging especially when we have in the

past “given-in” to keep the peace. Your child will most likely push against you, but we need to focus on being consistent, so they know that no is always no.

You might want to create pictures or symbols to help a child who might need them, for example, an image of someone shouting with another picture of a time out mat or chair.

You would have a discussion with your child about actions and consequences when they are calm using the pictures.


However, I really encourage parents to try a more positive approach. Rather than focusing on the “don’t do this”, focus on positive reinforcement strategies with labelled praise. Praising a child when they do something that you want them to is a better motivator than criticising the behaviour you don’t want.

Rather than saying “good job”, which is not specific and very generic, try: “I can see that you really tried hard not to shout at your brother. Well done for moving away when you started feeling angry”.

Be specific when praising your child as this shows that you are really seeing and listening to what they are doing or saying.

BENEFITS OF BOUNDARIES

Having clear and consistent boundaries can help our children to:

- Develop self-discipline and self-control.
- Make informed choices and take responsibility for their actions (which is especially important when so many decisions around their health and care are made on their behalf).
- Move through and navigate the world around them with confidence (they learn to come up with better coping strategies when things are unpredictable).
- Build important life skills, including time management and decision-making. 



Dr **Emma McKinney** owner of Disability Included Consultancy, a company providing disability employment and educational research, training, support, and resources.

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Unlocking employment through learnerships

To take full advantage of the opportunities that learnerships can offer, it is important to come prepared

Finding a job can be especially tough for people with disabilities. Learnerships are a great way to gain new skills and work experience, as well as access meaningful employment. Designed to help participants gain qualifications while employed, earning a stipend, learnerships are an excellent option for wheelchair users aiming to enter the job market. To maximise the benefits of a learnership, it helps to be prepared:

RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

Find learnerships that fit your interests and career goals. Registering on websites like [Skills Junction](#) and [NGO ConnectSA](#) can provide you access to learnerships programmes. [Job-Abled](#) specialises in disability requirements and placement. Social media can also be a helpful platform to look out for upcoming learnerships. Follow recruitment agencies, disability organisations and the companies that you are interested in. Many organisations post about learnerships.

AN UPDATED CV

Ensure that your CV is up to date with your skills, experience and qualifications. You can


tailor your CV to highlight the areas that are most relevant to the specific learnership

CONFIDENCE SPEAKING

Practice your interview skills so that you can discuss your skills, experiences, qualifications and interest confidently. Use some common questions asked in interviews to practice answering clearly and concisely. Be sure to tailor your response to the learnership that you are applying for.

GET OUT THERE

Attending career fairs, workshops or networking events can be a great way to connect with people who work in the fields that you are interested in and learn of learnership or vacancies within organisations. This can also be a good opportunity to market yourself and practice your interview skills.

Learnerships provide wheelchair users with a valuable opportunity to develop skills, gain work experience, and enhance their employability. By thoroughly preparing and actively seeking out opportunities, you can unlock new career prospects and pave the way for a successful future. 



Rustim Ariefdien is a disability expert who assists businesses to “let the Ability of disAbility enAble their profitAbility” through BBBEE, skills development, employment equity and socio-economic development. His purpose is the economic empowerment of persons with disability in Africa. As a person with a disability himself, he has extensive experience in the development and empowerment of persons with disability.

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Stress as a hole

To avoid getting stuck in a hole is to stop digging, or in this case, stop feeding the stress

No, it's not bad spelling. Stress is a hole we dig for ourselves. The first thing that we must do to get out is stop digging. The festive season has passed, leaving many with lighter wallets, heavier credit card bills, and perhaps a few extra kilograms. The new year is already in full swing, bringing fresh aspirations, but also the stress of expectations, responsibilities, and the relentless pressure to make this year the year of change.

For many, the combination of financial strain, ambitious resolutions, and everyday challenges can feel like being stuck in a deep pit with no way out. But here's the truth, just as we dig ourselves in, we can climb back out.

WHAT IS STRESS?

At its core, stress is a natural survival mechanism. When our ancestors faced a life-threatening situation, their bodies needed to react instantly. This response, often called fight-or-flight, pumped adrenaline and cortisol through their systems, increasing heart rate, sharpening focus, and preparing the muscles to act. That was useful when outrunning a saber-toothed tiger. But today?

Our stress triggers aren't wild animals. They're traffic jams, work deadlines, financial worries, and the ever-present pressure to keep up. Instead of occasional bursts of stress for survival, many of us live in a state

of chronic stress where our bodies never fully return to a relaxed state.

CHEMISTRY OF STRESS

When stress kicks in, our nervous system sounds the alarm. The brain's amygdala, responsible for processing emotions, sends distress signals to the hypothalamus which then activates the sympathetic nervous system. This chain reaction releases adrenaline, giving us an immediate jolt of energy. If the stress continues, the adrenal glands release cortisol, the so-called "stress hormone".

While useful in small doses, prolonged exposure to cortisol wreaks havoc on the body. It suppresses the immune system, increases inflammation, disrupts digestion, and even impairs memory. Mentally, chronic stress can lead to anxiety, depression, and burnout. Spiritually, it disconnects us from inner peace, leaving us feeling powerless and overwhelmed.

Interestingly, research suggests that the initial surge of cortisol drains from our system in about 90 seconds. However, we often continue to dwell on the stressful thought, replaying it in a loop, which triggers a fresh cortisol release each time.

This mental habit prolongs stress far beyond its natural lifespan. It keeps us stuck in an unnecessary cycle of anxiety. Recognising

this tendency is a crucial step toward breaking free.

POSITIVE OF STRESS

Not all stress is bad. Eustress, or positive stress, is the type of stress that can motivate and energise us. It's the excitement that we feel when facing a challenge, the drive to meet a deadline or the thrill of trying something new. Eustress can enhance our performance, boost our resilience, and contribute to our overall wellbeing. The key is to recognise and harness eustress while managing and minimising chronic, negative stress.

DIGGING DEEPER

Chronic stress deeply impacts on the body, mind and spirit:

- **Body:** Chronic stress is linked to heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and weakened immunity. It can manifest physically as headaches, muscle tension, digestive issues, stroke and sleep disturbances.
- **Mind:** When stress becomes habitual, it alters brain function. It shrinks the hippocampus (responsible for memory and learning) while strengthening the amygdala (the fear centre), making us more prone to anxiety and negativity.
- **Spirit:** A stressed mind rarely finds time for reflection, gratitude, or joy. It creates a sense of disconnection from ourselves, our loved ones, and even our purpose.

TO STOP DIGGING

The good news? Just as we dug the hole, we can climb out of it. It takes effort, but step by step, we can shift from surviving to thriving.

Recognise the shovel. The first step is awareness. What are the thoughts, habits or circumstances that keep your stress cycle going? Identifying your triggers is key to breaking free.

Breathe like you mean it. Breathing deeply

and intentionally is one of the fastest ways to signal safety to your nervous system. Try this simple technique:

- Inhale for four counts, through the nose.
- Hold for seven counts.
- Exhale for eight counts, through the mouth like blowing up a balloon.
- Repeat for a few minutes, and feel your body relax, start with the out breath.

Reframing your mindset. Stress isn't just about what happens to us. It's about how we perceive it. Instead of seeing stress as an enemy, reframe it as a challenge. Shift from "I can't handle this" to "I am learning to navigate this". Your brain's subconscious mind listens to your words, so choose them wisely.


Move your body. Exercise is a natural stress reliever. Whether it's stretching, resistance training, or simply walking or wheeling around in fresh air, movement releases endorphins, which is your body's natural mood boosters.

Set boundaries and prioritise rest. Constant busyness is not a badge of honour. It's a recipe for burnout. Learn to say no, protect your downtime, and ensure you get quality sleep.

Mindfulness and meditation. Being present in the moment can break the cycle of stress. Whether through meditation, journaling or simply focusing on gratitude, mindfulness helps shift the mind from chaos to clarity.

Connection and support. You don't have to climb out alone. Talk to friends, family or a life coach. Connection reduces stress by reinforcing that we are not alone in our struggles.

WAY OUT

Stress is real, but it doesn't have to define us. The hole may feel deep, but with small, intentional actions, we can stop digging and start climbing out. 



Len Davey is a qualified life coach. To book a session, contact him via his website: www.theworldwithin.co.za. A free "goal setting" session is offered without any obligation so that you can experience life coaching first hand.

Get in touch: len@theworldwithin.co.za



An Olympic dream delayed but never denied

The first Olympic photographer with a disability and Pretoria native Johann Meintjes's inspirational story is told in SuperSport's riveting series, *Real World Champions*

Johan Meintjes is a photographer who not only shattered barriers but rewrote the script of what is possible by becoming the first photographer with a disability to cover the Olympic Games at Paris 2024.

Johann's story is beautifully encapsulated in a moving five-minute episode as part of SuperSport's Real World Champions campaign, the broadcaster's attempt to go out of its way to find human stories of people who have used sport to uplift themselves and their communities.

His Olympic milestone was not just a professional accomplishment, it was the culmination of decades spent wrestling with a fate that sought to put him down.

Born in a mining town on the outskirts of Johannesburg, Johann was an unstoppable force from an early age.

"My parents heard about a gymnastics club starting at Monument High School," he recalls. "They took me to have a look, and from then on, I was hooked."



MAIN PHOTO: Johann Meintjes was an accomplished gymnast before a wrongly placed somersault resulted a spinal cord injury.

ABOVE: Following his injury, Johann returned to his career in teaching.

RIGHT TOP: He was able to enjoy his passion for sport once again when he took up photography. He even started a photography class for his students.

RIGHT BOTTOM: In 2024, Johann had the incredible opportunity to be an official photographer at the Olympic Games in Paris.

All photos supplied by SuperSport.



By his teens, he was representing the country as Springbok gymnast at international competitions, including the World Age Group Championships in Hawaii and later the World Championships in Switzerland.

“It was eye-opening,” he says. “We saw how far behind we were, but instead of discouraging us, it made us push harder, attempt more daring moves.”

By 1980, Johann achieved the unthinkable, finishing fourth at the World Championships in Brigg, Switzerland – a moment that should have cemented his legacy as one of South Africa’s greatest athletes. But fate had other plans.

“I went too low on a double back somersault and landed on my neck,” he recounts, his voice unwavering but heavy with memory. “One moment, I was an athlete at my peak. The next, I had to reckon with a new reality.”



RIGHT: Johann with the team at SuperSport during the filming of *Real World Champions*.

“


One moment, I was an athlete at my peak. The next, I had to reckon with a new reality.

Following surgery, Johann began the long, arduous road of building a life from scratch. Teaching had been his profession before the accident, and it became his anchor after it. Returning to the classroom, however, was no simple feat.

“There was no precedent for a teacher with a disability back then. I had to prove I could still do the job,” Johann. Supported by a principal whose father also used a wheelchair, Johann eventually resumed teaching, breaking barriers in a system not built for people in his position.

“You learn to adapt. To see strengths in others and nurture them,” he shares. Though teaching fulfilled him, gymnastics remained his first love. Photography became his way back to the sport.

“Photography gave me a new way to engage with the sport. It allowed me to tell stories through the lens that I could no longer tell with my body,” he says.

For Johann, the Olympics represent more than a stage for athletic prowess. They are a testament to the boundless possibilities of the human spirit. The boy who once dreamed of conquering the gymnastics floor achieved his Olympic dream his own way, through his camera lens. With his sights set on the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games, the story is far from over. 

Written by Kulani Nkuna. The full SuperSport Read World Champions featuring Johann Meintjes can be viewed on [Youtube](#).



Submit an entry

SuperSport is looking for more champions like Johann to feature on its *Real World Champions* series. Do you know of someone who has used sport to uplift themselves and/or their community?

Send an e-mail of no more than 500 words explaining why the person should be profiled by SuperSport to realworldchamps@supersport.com.

An all-inspiring force

Despite an amputation that is considered very limiting, Duane van Zyl has a zest for life that earned Heinrich's respect

They say that respect is earned and that is absolutely true! In my life and occupation, I have the privilege of dealing with and helping individuals who face severe challenges. For example, patients with spinal cord injuries who end up in wheelchairs or patients with amputated limbs.

We try our utmost best to rehabilitate them so that they can integrate back into society and live a meaningful life. There are a lot of variables that influence their rehabilitation outcomes for example, the quality of rehabilitation, family support and perseverance to name but a few.

However, every now and then you come across a patient with such a strong zest for life, with the will and determination of a badger to rise above their situation and still be incredibly successful against all odds. To us, this is all inspiring and forces most healthcare practitioners to just stand back and watch in awe how these people operate!

Duane van Zyl is such a man. He had a traumatic above-the-knee amputation after tearing a calf muscle and losing the blood supply to his foot. This is generally known as a very severe and limiting injury. Despite this, Duane decided to rehabilitate to the fullest.

He runs a very successful construction company, mainly focused on electric



installation. He's an active husband and father participating in all three of his children's activities. He loves hunting and fishing and if he is not at home you'll find him there. He is multi-talented. Whatever he needs, he builds – steel, plastic, paint or brickwork he does it all.

In addition to all of that, he has a kind loving sympathetic heart, always available to assist and inspire and advise newly amputated patients. Yes, Duane is a man among men that truly earns our respect! **R**



Heinrich Grimsehl is a prosthetist in private practice and a member of the South African Orthotic and Prosthetic Association (SAOPA).

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New normal for home routines

There are some practical steps that you can take to create a smoother daily routine at home

Adjusting to life at home after a spinal cord injury (SCI) can feel overwhelming, but with the right routines in place, you can regain independence and improve your overall wellbeing.

Whether you're navigating bladder and bowel management, staying active, preventing pressure sores, or making emotional and home adjustments, small daily habits can make a big difference.

Let's break it down into practical steps you can take to create a smoother daily routine.

BLADDER AND BOWEL MANAGEMENT

One of the biggest changes after an SCI is managing bladder and bowel function. Since

nerve signals may no longer control these functions as before, you'll need to follow a structured routine to prevent infections and complications.

- **Bladder care:** Many people use intermittent catheterisation or an indwelling catheter. Staying hydrated (without overloading your bladder), monitoring signs of infection, and keeping a schedule for emptying your bladder are key.
- **Bowel routine:** A regular bowel programme helps prevent accidents and constipation. This may include scheduled bathroom times, a high-fibre diet, staying hydrated, and sometimes medications or digital stimulation techniques as advised by your healthcare provider.

DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Staying as active as possible is essential for circulation, strength, and overall health. Even if movement is limited, incorporating activity into your daily routine can make a big impact.

- Passive and active range-of-motion exercises help prevent stiffness and improve flexibility.
- Seated strength exercises using resistance bands or weights can help maintain muscle tone.
- Standing frames or supported standing (if possible) promote bone health and circulation.
- Wheelchair mobility exercises keep your upper body strong and improve endurance.

Visit the [Enable Centre](#) page on Youtube to view demonstrations of the exercises you should incorporate in your daily routine.

PRESSURE RELIEF STRATEGIES

Preventing pressure sores (also called pressure ulcers) is crucial. Without proper movement, prolonged pressure on certain areas of the body can lead to serious skin issues. Here are some important preventative measures to take:

- **Frequent weight shifts:** If you're using a wheelchair, aim to shift your weight every 15 to 30 minutes.
- **Good skin care:** Keep your skin clean and dry, and check for redness or irritation daily.
- **Cushioning and positioning:** Use pressure-relieving cushions and mattress overlays to reduce pressure on vulnerable areas.

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Adapting to life with an SCI can be emotionally challenging. A strong support system and self-care strategies can help you maintain a positive outlook. Your support system might include:

- **Talking to someone:** Whether it's a friend, family member, or therapist, having someone to confide in is important.
- **Joining a support group:** Connecting with others who understand your experience can be empowering.
- **Engaging in hobbies:** Finding enjoyable activities, whether it's reading, painting, or gaming, can boost your mood.
- **Practicing mindfulness and relaxation:** Techniques like deep breathing, meditation, or journaling can help reduce stress and anxiety.


HOME ADAPTATIONS

Making your home more accessible can make daily life much easier. Consider these adaptations:

- Wider doorways and ramps for easier wheelchair access.
- Grab bars in bathrooms for safety during transfers.
- Lowered countertops and accessible storage to maintain independence in the kitchen.
- Smart home technology for voice-controlled lighting, door locks, and temperature settings.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Adjusting to life after an SCI takes time but establishing a solid home routine can help you regain confidence and independence. Small, consistent efforts in bladder and bowel care, physical activity, pressure relief, emotional wellbeing, and home modifications can lead to a better quality of life.

Remember, you're not alone. Lean on your support network and medical team to help you navigate this journey. If you have any tips or strategies that have worked for you, share them with others in the SCI community. Your experience might be the encouragement someone else needs! 



The **Enable Centre** is an outpatient physical and cognitive rehabilitation centre with branches in Cape Town and Durban. It operates as a social enterprise, meaning it provides therapy to people from all socioeconomic backgrounds whilst incorporating innovative technology and evidence-based treatments.

Get in touch: admin@enablecentre.org



50 years as haven of heartfelt support

Cheshire Home Summerstrand in Gqeberha turns 50 this year. Quintin van Jaarsveld reflects on half a century of support

For the past 50 years, Cheshire Home Summerstrand has operated on passion as a haven of heartfelt support for adults with disabilities. Situated in Gqeberha, the home was officially opened by the late Professor Jan Christiaan Barnard in 1975 and was visited by the Honourable Leonard Cheshire in the 1980s. Through unrelenting drive, the home has stood the test of time. As it celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, the home boasts space for 56 adults with disabilities with unique and diverse needs.

The main building houses 44 residents while the remaining residents are in cottages designed for independent or assisted living. The home provides accommodation with full-time care, healthy and sufficient meals, assistance with medical needs and transportation to hospitals and clinics – all within a safe and sustainable environment. The home also runs Khaya Cheshire, a partial daycare centre for 16 children with disabilities.

“Our mantra is to live each day with kindness in your heart,” says Deidre Burger, who

took over as manager of the home from her parents Les and Alicia Kirkland in 2016. “It’s to remember that if there’s a will, there’s a way, and to be happy.”

The personification of passion, Deidre says: “Mine is the most rewarding ‘job’ in the world. Every little thing one does for the residents is appreciated. Taking them to cricket and rugby games, shows, Addo, doing arts and crafts, playing games and interacting – all these activities are greatly appreciated. I don’t see it as a job, I see it as a lifestyle. It’s like coming home to family every morning. The residents are my life. I am a very protective mother hen.”

“Our staff are also very protective of the residents. The management team is small and work together well, and the positivity filters down to the various teams. Nothing is too much for any of them. The responsibility of managing a home of this size is daunting and sometimes challenging, but with a strong management team and well-trained staff, the sky is the limit,” she adds.

Among the residents are Dan Mkele and Simanga Mandita, who sustained life-changing injuries on the rugby field. The pair, who are assisted by the Chris Burger Petro Jackson Players' Fund – also known as Rugby's Caring Hands – say they feel right at home at Cheshire.

While playing centre for Storms Breakers in the Eastern Cape back in 1996, Dan broke his neck at the age of 30, rendering him a C3/4 complete quadriplegic. He moved to Cheshire in 1999 and admits: "It can be hard sometimes as one is limited by movement and your body does not always allow you to do the things that you want to do." He quickly adds: "The food here is good and the staff are very caring."

Simanga was injured at the age of 29 in 2023. He played flank for Young Brothers in Middledrift and is a C5 complete quadriplegic who moved to the home in November of that year. He says: "I feel very welcome, the staff have been kind, and I have made friends here. It's hard to lie down sometimes when you want to move around, but our bodies have to rest."

As a man who enjoys watching rugby and often takes trips to the boardwalk to enjoy the fresh air and beautiful scenery Gqeberha has to offer, Simanga was one of the Players' Fund recipients who went to the Stormers' Investec Champions Cup game against Toulon at the Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium last December.

"It was a wonderful experience and opportunity to meet the players and go onto the field afterwards. I'm grateful to the home and the Players' Fund for arranging the tickets," Simanga recalls.

Deidre says both Dan and Simanga have fit in seamlessly. She shares: "Dan has participated in art lessons and learned how to paint by mouth. His artwork is magnificent! He has also served as a Residents Committee member,



TOP LEFT: Dan Mkele (left) at a rugby match.

TOP RIGHT: Deidre Burger at a sports match with the residents from cheshire home summerstrand.

RIGHT: Simanga Mandita (left) with stormers rugby player Manie Libbok.

served on the Board, and participated in several activities that the home has offered. He is a great sports enthusiast and has painted a beautiful picture of Siya Kolisi.

"Simanga has very quietly adapted to the home very well. He has made friends with many of the residents and has also enjoyed Addo outings, rugby matches and cricket games. Fitting into a boarding establishment is a huge adjustment for a young man and he has managed this with ease."

"He is planning to do his Grade 11 at Cheshire this year. Independence is hugely important to both gentlemen as well and we encourage this. They wheel off to the local shops and manage their own budgets," she continues.

Fundraising remains vital for the home to continue its good work. To support their cause in this, their 50th year of existence, visit www.cheshirehomes.co.za or e-mail managerchs@cheshirehomes.co.za. 



Quintin van Jaarsveld writes on behalf of the Players' Fund. If you would like to support the Chris Burger Petro Jackson Players' Fund, visit their website at www.playersfund.org.za and select any number of the giving options available, which include EFT, payfast, Snapscan and Zapper.

Get in touch: contact@playersfund.org.za



Drive for inclusion with adaptive golf

The Adaptive Sports Fund proved golf can be accessible to all through its Adaptive Golf Day

Golf is a game of patience, precision, and skill. For individuals with disabilities, it is also a game of possibility – an opportunity to challenge limitations and experience the joy of sport in an inclusive environment. The Adaptive Sports Fund's Adaptive Golf Day at Golf Village Gillooly's Driving Range proved just that by making golf accessible to all.

Held in November 2024, the event welcomed participants of all abilities to experience adaptive golf firsthand. Whether seasoned golfers or complete beginners, everyone had the chance to pick up a club, feel the thrill of a well-hit shot, and enjoy the camaraderie of the sport.

With specialised equipment such as modified grips and the paragolfing chair, which features a hydraulic standing mechanism and battery-powered motors, adaptive golf ensures that no one is left on the sidelines.

BREAKING BARRIERS ON THE GREEN

Many people with disabilities hesitate to try golf; unsure of how they will manage the technical aspects of the game. Adaptive golf removes these barriers to make the sport as much about enjoyment as it is about skill. The event's inclusive atmosphere highlighted how sport can empower and build confidence.

"Golf is a game that brings people together," said one participant. "It's not just about the swing. It's about being outdoors, meeting new people, and proving to yourself what you're capable of."

Adaptive golf enables people with disabilities to play alongside friends and family. Gillooly's Driving Range provided the perfect setting, with a relaxed space where participants could focus on improving their shots without pressure.

With experienced instructors and volunteers on hand, newcomers received guidance, while

MAIN PHOTO: The Adaptive Sport Fund hosted an adaptive golfing day to showcase how the sports can be enjoyed by everyone.

LEFT: The paragolfing chair was a game-changer for participants as it allowed them to take a full swing.

experienced adaptive golfers demonstrated just how competitive and engaging the sport can be.

A SPORT FOR EVERYONE


One of the greatest aspects of adaptive golf is its inclusivity. Whether played recreationally or competitively, golf can be enjoyed by people of all mobility levels.

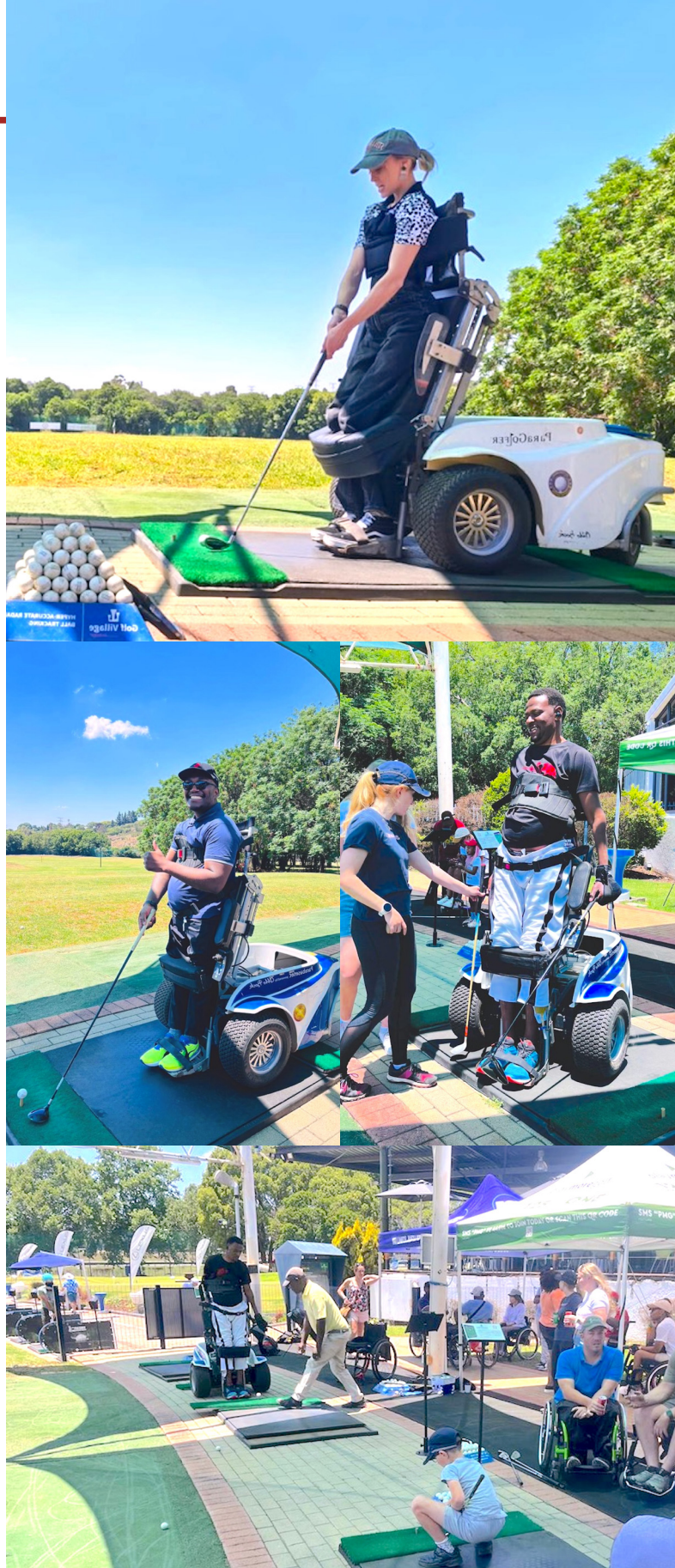
The paragolfing chair was a game-changer for paraplegic and quadriplegic participants. It allowed them to stand and take full swings with ease. Seeing individuals who once thought golf was out of reach take their shots with confidence was truly inspiring.

Beyond the competition, golf offers a sense of freedom, independence, and mental focus. It challenges both the body and the mind, helping players improve concentration, coordination, and resilience.

LOOKING AHEAD

Events like the Adaptive Golf Day are essential for spreading awareness and encouraging more people to get involved. Adaptive Sports Fund continues to advocate for inclusive sports, proving that with the right equipment and support, everyone can take a swing at success.

A special thanks to Golf Village Gillooly's Driving Range for providing an accessible venue and to the dedicated instructors and volunteers who made the day possible. For anyone looking to explore adaptive golf, the message is clear: Grab a club, hit the greens, and drive your passion forward! 



Jeffrey Yates writes for the **Adaptive Sports Fund (ASF)** is a non-profit company, committed to supporting individuals with disabilities and breaking down barriers and creating a more equitable and just world for all people, regardless of their abilities. and with the following objectives: Supporting, enriching, encouraging, motivating and providing resources that empower individuals with disabilities to achieve their goals for them to live their best lives and creating a more accessible and equitable society for all.

Get in touch: info@adaptivesportsfund.org



Wheelchair rugby on the rise

With the introduction of an exciting new format and more opportunities to compete internationally, wheelchair rugby is quickly growing in popularity among South Africans

In a country where rugby is a beloved national pastime, a new and exciting chapter is unfolding. South Africa Wheelchair Rugby is experiencing unprecedented growth, and the sport is gaining momentum at an incredible pace.

With the introduction of a new and exciting format, and acceptance into the European Division C, the future of wheelchair rugby in South Africa has never looked brighter.

For years, wheelchair rugby in South Africa has been a niche sport, with a dedicated but

small following. However, in recent years, the sport has experienced a surge in popularity, with more and more players, coaches, and fans joining the ranks.

One of the key drivers of this growth has been the introduction of the new Fives format. This exciting and fast-paced version of the game is played with five players on each team, rather than the traditional four.

The Fives format is designed to be more accessible and inclusive, making it easier for new players to join the sport.

However, the growth of wheelchair rugby is not just limited to the domestic scene. The sport has also been set on a new international growth path with the South African Paralympic format team recently being accepted into the European Division C league where it will compete against the likes of Sweden, Ireland, Austria, and Italy.

This is a major milestone for the sport in South Africa. It marks a significant step forward in the country's bid to become a major player on the international wheelchair rugby scene and chart a course to the Paralympic Games.

Competing in the European Division C will provide the South African Paralympic format team with the opportunity to test themselves against some of the best teams in the world. It will also provide a platform for the team to gain valuable experience and exposure, and to showcase the talent and skill of South African wheelchair rugby players.

The acceptance of the South African Paralympic format team into the European Division C is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the players, coaches, and administrators who have worked tirelessly to grow and develop the sport.

In preparation for international competition and to bolster the level of the sport at home, South Africa Wheelchair Rugby (SAWCR) has been busy rolling out a host of development initiatives in preparation for its first Europe Division C league event in September 2025:

- An Officials Training Course with British Paralympic Official Simon Starr was held in September 2024.
- SAWCR Head Official, Maryka Jordaan, was invited to participate at the GBWR Allied Mobility Division 1 League Event in Stoke-on-Trent in January 2025, where she was awarded with Official of the Tournament.




ABOVE: Maryka Jordaan, SAWCR Head Official, at the GBWR Allied Mobility Division 1 League Event in Stoke-on-Trent in January 2025 where she was awarded with Official of the Tournament.

- A Coaches Clinic and High-Performance Camp is underway in February 2025 with Rob Tarr and Stuart McLindon of Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby.
- Exciting new partnership with Wiele 500 to find funding for SAWCR international competition.

South Africa Wheelchair Rugby is on the rise, and the sport is rolling with momentum. With its growing popularity, new and exciting format, and international recognition, wheelchair rugby is set to become a major player on the South African and international sports scene.

As the sport continues to grow and develop, one thing is certain: The future of wheelchair rugby in South Africa is bright, and it's an exciting time to be a part of it.

To get involved as a player, coach, official, volunteer or sponsor, contact Bennie Erasmus, the SAWCR chairman, at 082 828 9383 or chairman@sawcr.co.za. 



South Africa Wheelchair Rugby (SAWCR) is the official administrator of the wheelchair rugby in South Africa. The association is involved in all aspects from development and local club support to game officials and managing the national wheelchair rugby league. For more information, please contact admin@sawcr.co.za or visit the official Facebook page at [@SAWheelchairRugby](https://www.facebook.com/SAWheelchairRugby).

Get in touch: admin@sawcr.co.za



Sensory substitution in sexual pleasure

By retraining your brain to interpret new sensations as pleasurable, you can reignite your sexual pleasure post-injury

Sexual pleasure is often thought of as purely physical, but the reality is much more complex. Our brain plays a crucial role in how we experience intimacy, and after a spinal cord injury (SCI), it can adapt in remarkable ways.

One of the most powerful tools in rediscovering sexual pleasure post-SCI is sensory substitution during which the brain rewires itself to interpret new sources of sensation as pleasurable.

Sensory substitution is the brain's ability to reassign meaning to sensations from different parts of the body. When one pathway is lost or diminished (such as genital sensation after

an SCI) the brain can learn to respond to other sensory inputs instead.

This process is a form of neuroplasticity, where the nervous system adapts and creates new connections to enhance remaining abilities.

Many people with an SCI report increased sensitivity in areas just above the level of their injury, like the neck, shoulders, ears, or scalp.

Others discover that sensations they previously overlooked (such as deep pressure, vibration, or temperature changes) can take on new erotic significance. The key is to explore and train the brain to recognise these new sources of pleasure.

One way to harness sensory substitution is through body mapping. This involves intentionally exploring different areas of the body to identify spots that still respond to touch, pressure, or temperature in a pleasurable way.

This can be done alone or with a partner and may involve light touch, massage, or the use of different textures and temperatures.

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One way to harness sensory substitution is through body mapping.

A useful method is to close your eyes and focus on how different sensations feel. A partner can gently stroke, kiss, or apply pressure to different areas while you take note of what evokes a response.

Many people with SCI find that erogenous zones shift post-injury, and by repeatedly stimulating these areas in a sexual context, the brain starts to associate them with arousal and pleasure.

Beyond touch, our other senses (sight, sound, smell, and taste) can significantly enhance sexual pleasure.

Sound: Music, erotic talk, or whispered words can heighten arousal. Some people find that certain sounds, like a partner's voice or breathing, become more important after losing physical sensation.

Sight: Visual stimulation, including watching a partner, using mirrors, or even erotic media, can amplify arousal.


Smell: Scents like perfume, essential oils, or even a partner's natural scent can create a deeper emotional and sexual connection.

Taste: Playful use of different flavours, like chocolate, fruit, or flavoured lubricants, can engage the taste buds in the experience.

By incorporating multiple senses, the sexual experience becomes richer and less dependent on traditional physical sensations.

Relearning pleasure is a process that requires patience. The key is consistent, intentional exploration. Just as muscles strengthen with training, the brain can develop new sexual pathways with practice.

The goal isn't to replace what was lost but to rediscover and redefine what sexual pleasure means for you.

For those willing to explore, sensory substitution can open new doors to intimacy, proving that sexuality after SCI is not just possible – it can be deeply fulfilling. 

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Dr **Danie Breedt** is a passionate scholar-practitioner in the field of psychology. He divides his time between training, research and clinical practice. Danie works from an integrative interactional approach in psychotherapy, dealing with a wide range of emotional difficulties and sexual rehabilitation for patients with disabilities. He is the co-owner of Charis Psychological Services, a psychology practice that specialises in physical rehabilitation across South Africa.

Get in touch: danie@charispsychology.co.za

Disability, action and thrills set in Cape Town

Author Steve Kealy has written a gripping thriller set in Cape Town that features characters with disabilities. Cape Fire tells the riveting story of Devlin Moore as he searches for his missing mother in Cape Town with the help of his tech-savvy sister, Clarissa, who is a wheelchair user.



This first book in the series, along with Steve's other books, are available as e-books or print-on-demand paperbacks from [Amazon](#).

Steve has lived an interesting life, living in ten countries across three continents, and worked as an award-winning journalist. He also had a visual impairment for half of his life, which was later corrected through surgery. He is now a volunteer firefighter living in Melbourne, Australia. [R](#)



OCC celebrates 21 years

Despite initial concerns over a lack of funding, the Outeniqua Chair Challenge (OCC) celebrated its 21st year on Saturday, 15 March, with wheelchair users from across South Africa and neighbouring countries travelling to George to participate. There was a 42.2-km, 21.1-km and 10-km race as well as five-kilometre fun event. Several Paralympian medalists, including Pieter du Preez, joined the event.

A big thank you to all the sponsors who made the event possible including the Garden Route Mall, the Western Cape Government, Master Cargo, Lancewood, Safari, Garden Route District Municipality, George Herald, AlgoaFM, and iX with Carpe Diem School providing the venue. We hope to see the racers return next year. [R](#)

2025 Events Calendar

DISABILITY LAWN BOWLS CHAMPIONSHIP 5 to 13 April 2025

The 2025 National PDBSA Disability Lawn Bowls Championship will be taking place in Johannesburg in April. Visit the [official website](#) for more information.

NATIONAL PARA SURF CHAMPIONSHIPS 11 to 13 April 2025

The 2025 National Para Surf Championships will take place at the Durban Beachfront from 11 to 13 April.

WINGS FOR LIFE WORLD RUN 4 May 2025

The [Wings for Life World Run](#) is happening on 4 May. Join from anywhere in South Africa with the app or join one of the virtual events held in Cape Town, Centurion or Gqeberha.

ADAPTIVE GOLF 10 May 2025

Join the Adaptive Sports Fund for their adaptive golf day in May. For more information, visit their [Facebook page](#).

SASCA CONFERENCE 22 to 24 May 2025

The bi-annual conference returns to Cape Town in May. Register for the event on the [official website](#).

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