

# RG Active Rehabilitation through kayaking





# Mats-Erik Bjerkefors





# What is RG Active Rehabilitation? (RG Aktiv Rehabilitering)

Non-for-profit members organisation

Start in 1976: recruitment to professional sport. Quick change of track

Method: Active Rehabilitation





## RG:s vision:

A rich and inspiring life for  
people with spinal cord injury  
and others in similar situations



## Mission

- Be aware of physical possibilities and maximize independence through physical training
- Strengthen each individual's courage, willpower and ability to take an active part in society
- Be a pioneer on the method Active Rehabilitation and spread it to other countries





# Metod: Active Rehabilitation

- Peers
- Focus on possibilities
- Daily life
- Physical training as a tool
- Mental process.





# Why we started to paddle

Outdoor active rehabilitation

Complement to indoor rehabilitation

All year around

# Reflections after the first excursion

- Better outdoor gear and proper clothing
- Need to develop an adapted seat
- Learn more about kayaking and safety before going out





# Adapted seat

(Company: Anatomic Sit)



# Step1

## Indoor practice





## Step 2

## Calm water



# Double kayak with an extra cockpit



Adapted  
seat





## Step 3 Day trip





## Step 4 Kayaking in the archipelago





# Archipelago

- Many small islands
- Smooth rock surface
- Right of public access
- Mix of sweet and salt water
- No tide

# Preparations – area for the excursion

## Find a suitable area and check out:

1. Good launching places with accessible parking, toilets, ramps, jettys etc
2. Campground and a plan B. Sheltered and accessible natural harbor, smooth rock surface and enough space for tents and outdoor washroom
3. Spots for lunchbreak (smooth rock surface, sheltered paddling route, different wind direction options)
4. A solution for outdoor washroom



# Preparations- the group/participants

- Well prepared participants - training before hike (e g indoor pool exercises and safety training, evening paddling, day trips in archipelago)
- Leaders need to be informed about participants pre-skills, mobility and needs
- Group size - depending on needs of participants (participant + leader/assistant) (e g 5 and 5) Invite family members and friends





**Easy access**





# Camp ground





# Camping





To dine out





# Transferering





# Outdoor washroom

# Steps for a canoe club wishing to start up activities for paddlers with physical disabilities

- Check interest in the club
- Find instructors with different skills
- Invent accessibility and make adjustments when necessary on physical premises (indoor and outdoor)
- Education, e g courses like RGs leadership education
- Canoes, kayaks appropriate for purpose
- Outreach work - must let people know about possibilities





# Sunset in September 2018



# RG outdoor instructor education



**Next workshop  
May 2021**



# KAJAK & SKRIDSKO HANDBOK

för dig med funktionsnedsättning



Handbook: kayak  
and para skating

The book includes  
an instructional  
movie:<https://vimeo.com/340150469>



# Thank you!



## Contact

Mats-Erik Bjerkefors

E-mail:

[Mats-erik.bjerkefors@rgaktivrehab.se](mailto:Mats-erik.bjerkefors@rgaktivrehab.se)