

# The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Honoring 30 Years of Civil Rights Protections

By Jamie Fleshman, SPT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) give civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities, similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. July 26, 2020 will mark the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was signed into law by President George H.W. Bush in 1990.

Under the ADAAA, disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment. The ADAAA prohibits discrimination in all areas of public life, including transportation, public spaces, employment, government programs and services, telecommunications, and businesses (including private businesses open to the public).

Protection under these federal laws is divided into a three-pronged area of coverage. It includes protections for an individual:

- Currently experiencing disability.
- With a record of disability that substantially limits a major life activity.
- Regarded as having a disability but whose disability does not substantially limit a major life activity.

The ADA National Network, which provides information, guidance, and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), is celebrating the act's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with programs and events throughout the year and on its actual anniversary, July 26, 2020. To learn more about the ADA 2020 anniversary event, visit [the adaanniversary website](#).

## ADA ANNIVERSARY MONTHLY THEMES—2020

The ADA National Network has chosen the following monthly themes for educational programs and celebratory events:

January:	Transportation & Telecommunications Access	website.
February:	Voting Access	<a href="http://www.adalawproject.org/summary-of-the-adaaa">http://www.adalawproject.org/summary-of-the-adaaa</a> . A plain-language summary of the amendment
March	Brain Injury Awareness	legislation.
April:	Traveling the World—Individuals with Disabilities	<a href="https://askjan.org">https://askjan.org</a> . Accommodation resources for employers, employees, and job seekers.
May:	Recreation—disAbilities at Play	<a href="https://adata.org/national-product-search">https://adata.org/national-product-search</a> . Fact sheets by topic.
June:	Countdown to ADA Anniversary	<a href="https://adata.org/faq-search">https://adata.org/faq-search</a> . FAQ search.
July	Celebrate the ADA Anniversary	<a href="https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/people.html">https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/people.html</a> . Health information.
August	Back-to-School Access	<a href="http://www.apta.org/ADA/">http://www.apta.org/ADA/</a> . A resource page for physical therapists.
September	Emergency Preparedness and Management	<a href="https://www.ada.gov/medicare_mobility_ta/medicare_ta.htm">https://www.ada.gov/medicare_mobility_ta/medicare_ta.htm</a> Very relevant to PTs in the clinic.
October	Employment and Public Accommodations	<a href="https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/disability_main">https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/disability_main</a> Modifications for people with disabilities.
November	Veterans	
December	Moving Forward and Sharing Stories	

## ADA INFORMATION AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

<http://www.adasoutheast.org/>. Comprehensive information and updates about the ADA.

<https://www.ada.gov/index.html>. The ADA's main

## *About the Author*



Jamie Fleshman is a second-year Doctor of Physical Therapy student at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia. She will also begin the Master of Public Health program at Rollins School of Public Health at Emory in August 2020 as a dual degree path. Jamie served in the United States Navy as a Mandarin Chinese linguist for eight years, and it was during this time that she began to appreciate the role physical health and wellness played in maintaining her own mental and emotional health. With this in mind, she finished her service with the military and moved to Oregon to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Human Physiology at the University of Oregon. During her undergraduate career, Jamie discovered a passion for social justice and the humanities through a secondary focus in Women's and Gender Studies. This led her to seek out the dual DPT/MPH program at Emory, where she hopes to acquire the skills necessary to implement community-based rehabilitation programs for vulnerable populations. Writing and photography have always been creative outlets for Jamie, and she aims to use these skills in combination with her knowledge of the human body to highlight the multiplicity of human experience around us.