

# Engineering students innovate wheelchair-accessible fitness equipment

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Student demonstrating how to use the prototype. Credit: University of Ottawa

A team of five engineering students from the University of Ottawa has

developed a prototype that's transforming the fitness experience for individuals with mobility challenges. The prototype makes a standard Concept2 rower wheelchair accessible, providing increased opportunities for physical activity and well-being.

The [project](#), part of a second-year engineering design course, was initiated in response to a request from Brian Robitaille, a program coordinator with the City of Ottawa. Robitaille, who recently received the city's Creativity and Innovation Champion award for his work on the project, recognized the need for more accessible fitness options.

The prototype has been successfully implemented at the Jack Purcell Community Centre in Centretown, where it's already making an impact. "We have received testimonials from numerous clients with mobility issues who have benefited from being able to use the Concept2 machine," says Etienne Borm, a member of the student team. "This equipment provides a much-needed opportunity for upper-body strength training without requiring clients to be transferred from their wheelchairs."

Hanan Anis, director of the School of Engineering Design and Teaching Innovation, Faculty of Engineering and Engineering Design course professor, says, "This prototype is a testament to the ingenuity and problem-solving skills of our students. It is a prime example of how engineering can be used to create tangible solutions that improve the lives of others."

The student team, composed of Etienne Borm, Alyssa Carter, Noah Cummings, Abdullah Ramadan and Rémi Thomas Richard, is proud of the impact of its work. Their project highlights the potential of engineering education to drive innovation and address real-world challenges.

Provided by University of Ottawa

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