



Crip Fieldwork Toolkit

**Hacks and Methods to Make
Fieldwork Work as a Disabled
Researcher**

This toolkit offers hacks and methods for disabled researchers doing fieldwork.

It was developed during the workshop **Tooling Access: Developing Methods and Hacks for Crip Fieldwork** by Iz Paehr as part of the project Crippling Ethnographic Methods organised by the working group Collective Access of the Institute for European Ethnography at Humboldt University Berlin.

Disabled researchers face significant barriers when doing fieldwork. During the workshop, we collected and invented hacks, methods, and dreams towards crip fieldwork. We are sharing them with our communities in this zine.

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CRIPPING ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS presents

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Tooling Access: Developing Methods and Hacks for Crip Fieldwork

a workshop by Iz Paehr

Join in to collectively work on a Crip Me Toolkit!

By tooling access, we collect, develop and play with methods and hacks that are oriented towards crippling fieldwork. **Registration and Access Info in caption.**

Day 1 invites students and researchers to experiment with multi-modal methods and crip descriptions. This workshop takes place in Berlin.

Day 2 takes place online and is open to disabled researchers. We will work on collecting, naming, and potentially transforming barriers that we are met with during fieldwork. This day will result in a Crip Me Toolkit that presents crip access hacks that drive a wedge into the default ableisms of our fields.

Tactics of Disclosure: Tips about Disclosure of Personal Info

Disclosure can be a difficult process, sometimes placing people in uncomfortable or unsafe situations. No one should be forced to provide medical information in order to get their needs met.

The following tips and tricks minimize the need for disclosure and provide alternative phrases that people are less likely to dismiss or interrogate.

- Find and share your „harmless“ story to reduce emotional labour, even if it is a white lie. For example, „I have a family member who is immunosuppressed, so I need to wear a mask.“

- Use a traffic light system for socializing at gatherings by wearing stickers on a name-badge.

Red = not up for talking;
yellow/amber = up for people to approach me;
green = I am in a great mood for talking, please talk to me!

- Leverage your resources, such as asking to use a gender neutral or family bathroom if you need additional space for a mobility aid. This can increase accessibility and safety.

- Use your socially more accepted disability to justify your access needs.
- Using a therapy ball (like Yoga TuneUp) to mitigate pain or to provide sensory relief/distracton can be a great way to disclose without having to explain yourself. Often it sparks recognition from people who also have pain or use something similar to get through a class/event/fieldwork moment.
- Wear a t-shirt or sweatshirt on bold days (like „Your Ableism is Showing“ or „Disabled & Dangerous“)
- Advocate for general accessibility and describe how it benefits everyone. For example, requesting everyone uses a microphone during a meeting so everyone can hear.





Other sample sentences:

- „I have a very intense work schedule right now so I can't meet for XX“
(but I'm actually lying on the couch)
- When asked „What happened?“ when people see my walking stick, saying:
„This is permanent“
(even if I don't need it all days)
- „Could we take a short break so I can [take a phone call, respond to an email, or other accepted activity]?“
(This can provide a break even if I do not need to do these things.)

Take Your Meds! (To the Field)

We need our meds. Sometimes our lives, not just quality of life, depends on them.

With all the restrictions around accessing and transporting medications, we collectively came up with some crip tips for taking meds during ethnographic fieldwork:

- Transport meds from places with better or more accessible healthcare systems—in coolers!
- Buy meds in bulk in places where they are inexpensive and available
- Take more meds with you than you think you will need
- Ask people to bring meds who visit
- Ship meds internationally when available and if you have time
- Get insurance exemptions for 3 or 6 month supplies (Taking supplies for several months)



- Exchange meds with friends
- Keep a digital and physical list of current medications and timing/dosage
- Print and duplicate prescriptions and keep them in many places (keep on person while traveling)
- Check laws about meds where you are going!
- Keep a small stash of critical meds in a little pouch that can be transferred into bigger bags or just go independently with you anywhere.
- Travel with your medications in socks so they don't spill all over your suitcase

- In the transition time, keep your meds in places where you will encounter them and can remember them when your routine is changing. Like in your path on the way to the bathroom. For sighted people, it helps sometimes to have clear containers to see if you took them.
- Connect with local spoonies to get tips for meds and general healthcare
- Create more autonomy, if possible, by finding ways to get it done without relying on health professionals
(I.e, Learning medical professional skills to self-administer meds, like with syringes)
- As often as possible, don't go places where you can't easily access your meds!
- Decorate your pill box <3



Things I'm Taking With Me to the Field

The field can be a complex spacetime to navigate. We have compiled suggested things to bring with you.

Everyone's list will be different, but thinking about some of these things ahead of time could make your field site that little bit more accessible.

- Meds—as discussed in Take Your Meds!
- A foldable cane (like Rehand)
- Custom mobility aids and specialized items (like an over the shoulder ice pack), if possible
- Card with translated medical information or dietary restrictions in the local language
- Fidgets
- Anything to minimize sensory noise: noise-cancelling headphones, ear buds, or ear plugs (like Loop)

- If I can, extra eyeglasses / EpiPens / Continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) devices, etc.
- Hot water bottle or heating pad
- Printed policies related to meds and access technology that staff are not trained on.
- A script to opt-out of surveillance tech at airports
- An emergency ID on what to do in case of a medical emergency
- A novel that acts as a space apart

- A sunflower lanyard, available at U.S. and some European airport info desks for people with non-apparent disabilities. The sunflower is supposed to be recognizable to airport staff so that you can skip queues/get assistance if you need it. I always wrap it around my cool bag with my meds.
- My emotions
- Digital map with all the places I need to be (e. g. hotel, food places, potentially silent places like parks)
- Useful apps for accessible transportation, food and grocery delivery, and emergency services

- Band-aids, lip balm, a nail file, matches, and insect repellent.
- Comforting blanket or stuffed animal



Fieldwork Methods to Mitigate Overwhelm and Exhaustion

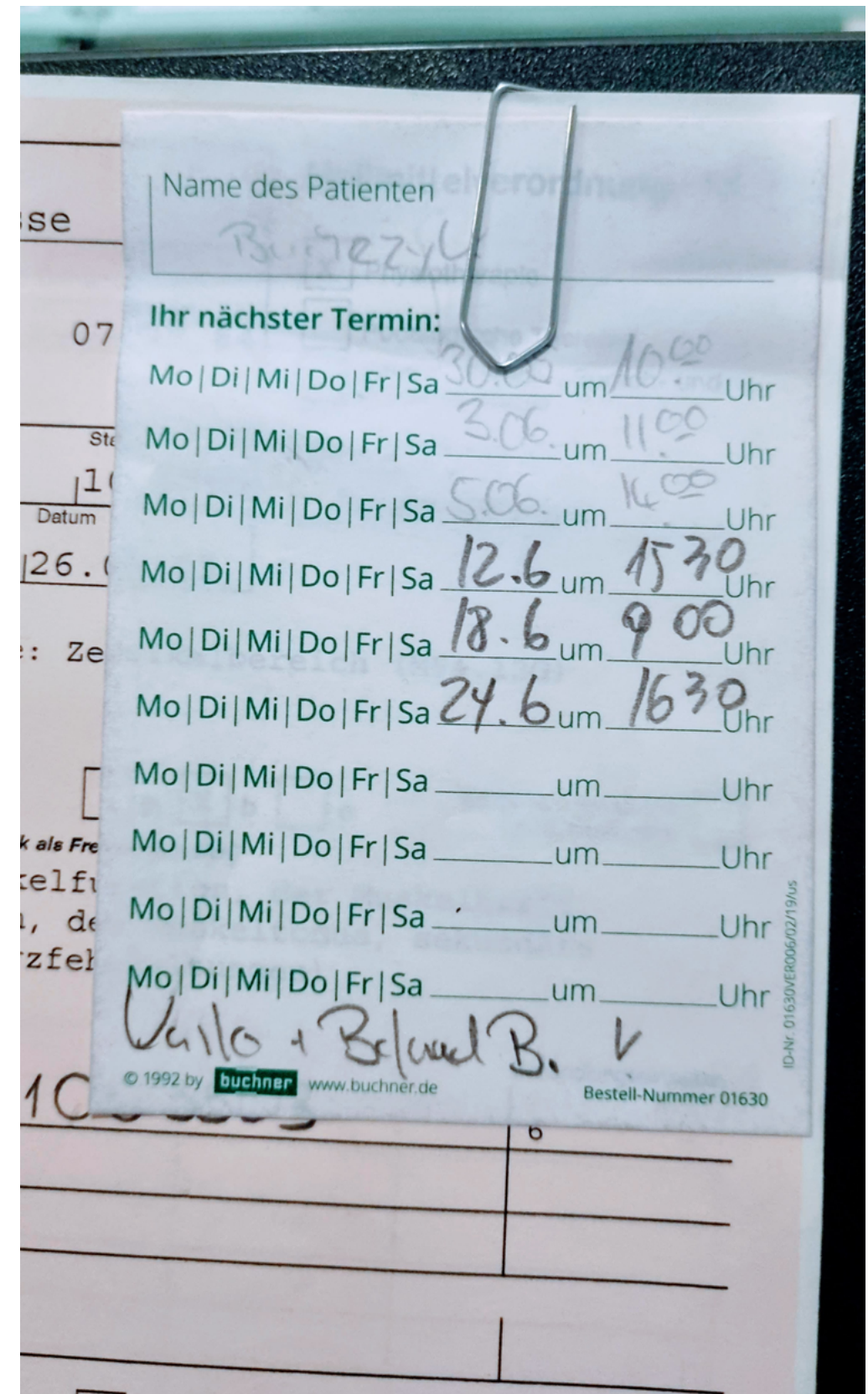
Ethnographic research can require a lot of spoons! But we have some crip hacks to suggest to readers for a less overwhelming and exhausting experience.

- Collaborate with other researchers (reference Durban's „Doing It Together“! and Durban and Joseph's „Reimagining Ethnographic Research for Collective Access through (Crip) Collaboration“)
- Remember to ask for help instead of trying to do everything yourself
- Wheel or walk around during interviews
- Record interviews or participant observation with audio or video to return to later
- Improve your own comfort and wellbeing: work from bed, fidget, stim, express your needs to other people

- Bring a hammock with you.



- Acknowledge the impact of scheduling around relentless medical appointments



- Ask participants to come to you if they can
- Schedule rest days during fieldwork where you can go to the beach, sit under a tree or be in a park amongst nature, sleeping all day
- Take long breaks to eat, move, relax, breathe, and play
- Work around your body mind needs in term of time, e.g. not scheduling meetings/ interviews before 10am or after 3pm



- Schedule time for decompression after fieldwork encounters (as part of the work day!)

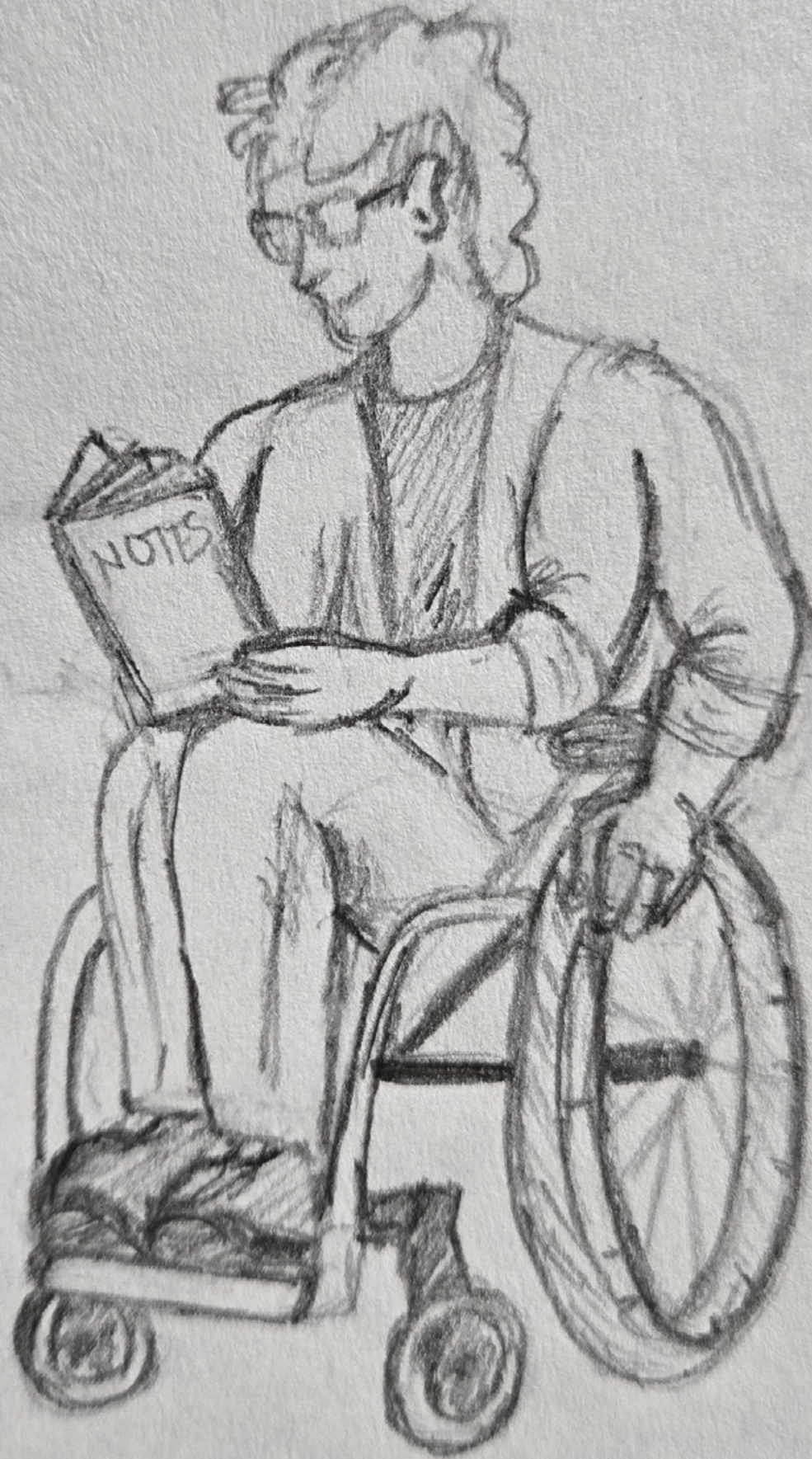


A Wish List of Sci Fi Hacks

These hacks arrive to us from our dream crip future. They put our bodies in relation to the world we want to inhabit, but for which there is not yet a bridge in the present. The hacks are our imaginative bridges.

- A lamp on my shoulder that visibilises my hearing/understanding of what was spoken and shared and which relieves me of the tiresome and annoying work of having to communicate it verbally (which I end up not doing and then am left out)





- A second set of hands for wheeling while writing
- A „spidey sense“ to connect with other crip scholars and avoid ableist people
- Captions that appear in the air in everyday conversations
- A magic „How To“ book for navigating a new disability or diagnosis

- A map that always brings you to the next silent space (park / library / room)



- A cosy room that is always next door: a way to leave the field momentarily for a break, to be unobserved, a room with water, a space to lie down, but you can always access it.



Space for Notes
(Invent Your
Own Hacks)



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