Aqua Progressions: Putting Together a Complete Program

By Janice Jaicks
Introduction

Water exercise is quickly becoming one of the more popular forms of exercise, largely because it makes it possible to exercise nearly all parts of the body without the strain and pressure associated with most land exercises. Aquatic exercise can be intense and enjoyable, and can appeal to people of all ages and ability levels. Water exercise can also benefit people with injuries, those who are recovering from injuries, and those with physical limitations. One of the greatest advantages of working out in the pool is that the exercises are low impact, yet the exertion and results can be equal to that of land-based training. This is why water exercise has become so popular with the older population.

The baby boomer generation (people born between 1946 and 1964) is the largest generation of Americans born in U.S. history, and those individuals are a large part of the water fitness crowd. Boomers make up as much as 30% of the total U.S. population, and in 2011 the first boomers turned 65. Approximately two-thirds of all seniors 65 and over (and 60% of those 50-64) have at least one chronic disease.

Though we are trying to move away from the stereotypical image of water aerobics classes (you know… chatty old ladies with swim caps, swaying back and forth to the Beach Boys), we do have to accept that the majority of our classes are comprised of older adults, many of whom deal with some form of chronic disease. As aquatic fitness professionals, that’s a lot of pressure for us to handle to design effective, safe, yet challenging water workouts! Additionally, we often have a mixture of ages, fitness levels, and abilities. Understanding how to work with all populations, often all in the same class, is key to becoming successful at your trade.

This manual has been created as a guide for those fitness professionals entering uncharted waters, as well as those of you who have been perfecting your craft for years. Providing general terminology, movements and diagrams, choreography notes, and other key pieces of the puzzle, Aqua Progressions is a tool for you to use to create a complete aquatic exercise program. Formats discussed and demonstrated in Aqua Progressions I include an intermediate aqua aerobics class (your “typical” cardio/aerobic portion of a class suited for most populations and ages), the core component of a class (noodles are used for suspended work and standing abs), a and an interval training (Tabata) segment. By understanding the properties of the water as they relate to exercise, the dos and don’ts of the business, and what makes a great class, you will be better prepared to become a successful, sought after water aerobics instructor!
Instructor Essentials - Section 2

Benefits of Water Exercise

1. Less stress on joints and muscles
2. Improves muscular strength and endurance
3. Improves core strength and endurance
4. Improves flexibility
5. Improves cardiovascular conditioning
6. Can burn large number of calories
7. Keeps the body cool during exercise
8. Fun and enjoyable
9. Improves balance in a safe environment
10. Great way to modify or spice up normal routine

Water Exercise Safety Tips for Class Participants

1. Contact a physician before starting a program- this may be the responsibility of the gym/club.
2. Know your limits (listen to your body)
3. Give yourself space for movement
4. Stay hydrated; water should be by your side at the pool
5. Be aware of wet surfaces while moving in and around pool area, including Jacuzzi
6. Stretch after exercise
7. Inform instructor of health background (recent surgeries, injuries, or diagnoses - including high BP and diabetes)
8. Wear correct proper footwear
9. Understand the pool environment: deep parts of the pool, slippery lane lines, etc.
10. Inform instructor if you are a novice swimmer
11. Use sunscreen if outdoors

Safety can be a big issue when it comes to combining water with exercise.
Be sure to make note of these safety tips!
Safety for you, the Instructor

1. Be sure you are CPR certified. First aid is also helpful.
2. Know where the AED machine is.
3. Wear proper footwear on the deck and/or in the water.
4. Use a chair or railing for demonstrating when needed
   a. Be sure the railing is not slippery
   b. Be sure the chair is secure
5. Stay hydrated.
6. Be mindful of the heat—indoors or outdoors.
7. When demonstrating on the deck, know that the concrete deck is not forgiving. Do a few moves then move onto motivating and cueing.
8. A mat on the deck might be helpful for impact.

Effective Leadership

Your teaching attitude is the most important factor in determining whether or not your students enjoy your program. Enthusiasm, energy, and a friendly, caring attitude toward your students will make your program a success. Make use of the many “tools” that you have for making your classes pleasurable and effective. The way you look, your voice, your personality, your attitude, your sense of humor, your movements, even your sense of rhythm are all part of your success!

LOOK GOOD
High level of energy
Good fitness
Proper nutritional habits
Dress neatly and appropriately (shorts over a one-piece suit/yoga pants, etc.)
Use proper body mechanics
Practice good alignment

SOUND GOOD
Use a well-modulated voice
Speak clearly with a wide variety of pitch
Repeat (and demonstrate) things more than once; acoustics are often poor
Be positive
Use your voice expressively to motivate the movements you want to see
Encourage
Cue Effectively

Continued
BE FUN
Use your own sense of play
Be friendly
Be exuberant
Smile a lot
Use humor
Let them know you love what you do!

BE CARING
Say something warm and friendly to your group at the beginning of class
Acknowledge individual accomplishments
Speak to students by name
Make tactful corrections
Don’t be stingy with honest compliments
Keep music at a tolerable level
Use age-appropriate music
Be available before and after class to answer questions
Start and end class on time

Let’s Get Started!

Based on a 60 minute class:
Warm up- 5 minutes
Aerobics/Cardio Segment 35 minutes
Post-Aerobic Cool Down - 3 minutes
Core Segment 15 minutes
Static Stretch 5 minutes

Let’s first break up our content by listing and describing the variety of formats and levels that we will be discussing in this manual and in this course.

Intermediate Water Aerobics - Continuous cardiovascular movements in shallow water (4½ feet deep) that typically involve impact and continuous arm and leg movement throughout the class. Patterns and choreography are combined using smooth transitions and the water’s properties to create a safe and effective workout. This class is designed for anyone desiring weight loss, cardio work, toning, and increased range of motion.

Continued

Core Work - In your typical “aqua aerobics” class, there is usually a toning and/or abdominal component that follows your cardio component. This routine is done suspended with a noodle
(preferably a monster noodle or a Hydro-Fit noodle) behind the participant’s back or under his/her shoulders. We have also included choreography for a standing shallow-water component, during which the participant places the noodle in front of him/her for core work.

**Aqua Tabata** - Using the Tabata-timing sequence of 20 seconds of high intensity (called rounds or cycles) followed by 10 seconds of rest, this interval training workout is a fun and effective workout that you and your students will love. There are eight cycles per Tabata. There is also a recovery period of 30 seconds to two minutes between each Tabata series. Be sure to use challenging cardio, suspended moves, and your motivational skills to make this a good workout for your class. The class can consist of eight Tabata segments for a total of sixty-four 20-second cardio moves per class! You can use shorter segments of Tabatas and add this to any current class.
Intermediate Water Aerobics

Intermediate Water Aerobics references any aquatic program that contains a thermal warm-up, a cardio component (aerobic), and a toning and strengthening component. These programs focus on the movement of the arms and legs at the same time, and are generally performed in chest-deep water.

When putting together an Intermediate Water Aerobics program, you will create a series of moves that take advantage of the water’s resistance. Knowing your population and offering modifications is an important part of your job as an instructor.

“I never start a class with equipment! I feel that it is safer to warm up the body without stressing it with aqua equipment. Once I get my class moving and get the blood pumping a little bit, then I may add in a piece of equipment for the workout. The goal is to start slow and build. Use progressive overload.”

-Janice Jaicks
Muscle Foundation and Action

Hyperextension – Moving beyond neutral extension

Concentric Contraction - A muscle action during which the muscle creates tension and shortens as it contracts.

Eccentric Contraction - A muscle action that lengthens as it contracts

Isometric Contraction – A muscle action during which the muscle creates tension without movement at the joint or a change in the muscle length. The tension remains constant because the length of the muscle does not change.

Body Positions

Anterior – Front part of the body

Posterior – Back part of the body

Supine – Lying on the back

Prone – Lying on the front

Movement Terms

Abduction - Moving body part away from the midline

Adduction - Moving body part towards the midline

Extension - An increase in the angle of a joint; returning to anatomical position

Flexion - The decrease of the angle of a joint, or moving closer to the bone or joint (think of flexing your bicep like Popeye)

Lateral Flexion - moving from the side/shortening (a side bend is a good example)

Rotation - there is a rotational movement through the joint; occurs in the transverse plane
### Planes and Axels of the Body

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plane</th>
<th>Planes Divide</th>
<th>Axels Run</th>
<th>Movement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Frontal</td>
<td>Front and Back</td>
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<td>Abduction, adduction &amp; lateral flexion</td>
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<td>Sagittal</td>
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<td>Transverse</td>
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An example of a move in the frontal plane is a jumping jack. An example of a move in the sagittal plane would be legs to the back or to the front. An example of a move in the transverse plane would be a twist/or any rotation.

### Water Fitness Foundations:

- **Suspended** – The feet are completely off the pool’s floor. You may or may not have a noodle.
- **Rebound** – Impacting on the pool floor.
- **Athletic Stance** – Legs are more than hip distance apart and knees are bent. This is a stance used during the strength training portion of your class.
- **Lunge Stance** – One leg is behind the other, with both knees bent. This is a stance used during the strength training portion of your class.
- **Plyometric** – A power rebound move; propelling off the floor.
**Water Fitness and Levers:**

**Levers** - Your arms and legs; your limbs

**Short Levers** – Bent legs or arms.

**Long Levers** – Straight legs/knees and straight arms/elbows. (make the move more challenging)

**More Terms:**

**Tempo** – The rate of speed at which the beats occur.

**Water Tempo** – An appropriate rate of speed used in the aquatic environment to allow for slower reaction.

**Warm-Up** – Moving the limbs in all directions, getting the body ready for work. The warm-up should not be static (i.e., holding a stretch or standing still).

**Resistance** – The force to be overcome by a lever.

**Drag** – The fluid-dynamic resistance that acts on an object that is moving through a particular fluid.

**Buoyancy** – The force exerted on an object by the fluid in which it is submerged.
Water Fitness and Laws

The Law of Action and Reaction
*For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.*

Contrary to many movements in air, the unique properties of water make action and reaction noticeable with every movement. In the water, when you sweep your hands to the left (action), it results in the body moving to the right (reaction). When you push your arms forward (action), it results in the body being pushed backward (reaction). This viscous environment presents an additional challenge when attempting to combine arm and leg movements. It also is a fabulous opportunity to make movements more exciting! Examples of movements are a pendulum, a mogul ski, leapin’ lizard and many more.

The Law of Acceleration
*The reaction of a body as measured by its acceleration is proportional to the force applied, in the same direction as the applied force, and inversely proportional to its mass.*

The law of acceleration can be used to affect exercise intensity in two ways: by pushing harder (applying more force) against the water’s resistance with the arms and legs as you start a movement to come up to speed, and by pushing harder (applying more force) against the pool bottom to propel the body up or forward. Examples of movements include the cheerleader; pushing against the pool bottom and a jumping jack, pushing harder against the water’s resistance. (The faster you move through the water the harder it is)

The Law of Inertia
*An object remains stationary unless a force causes it to move. When a force is applied that is greater than resisting forces, such as friction, the object will begin to gain speed in the direction of the applied force.*

The law of inertia includes three movements: movement of limbs (limb inertia), movement of the entire body (total body inertia), and movement of the water (water inertia).

Body inertia would apply to the changing of directions (traveling). If your students are moving in one direction and then reverse, this is considered the water’s inertia. Force is applied when you begin a jumping jack to abduct your legs and also to ‘stop’ the move. Most of this force is from drag. Traveling is a perfect example of the law of inertia.
Core Work

Several years ago, I took a land-based Pilates class twice per week. The instructor was fabulous with her moves and her cueing. The words she used to cue us to work our core and execute the Pilates moves were precise and made sense. This made me a better water exercise instructor. I try to use verbiage that my students will understand regarding working the proper muscle, rather than just going through the motions.

Core work on land is different than in the water. On land, it is obvious when the abdominals are being worked (sit-ups or crunches anyone?) since they must oppose gravity when contracting. However, the lack of gravity in the water makes it imperative that instructors come up with moves that properly engage the abdominals. Even more importantly, we must use cues effectively to articulate to students ‘how to work the muscle.’ In addition, many older students either don’t understand where their muscles are and how they contract, or might not know what that contraction should feel like. It’s our job to help them understand. A strong core means a strong back means a strong body.

The abdominal muscles provide movement and support to the trunk, often called the core. They also assist in the breathing process. One of the key functions of the core is to provide postural support to the body and a healthy back.

The deeper the muscle is located (i.e., the closer to the spine), the greater capacity it has for creating and maintaining a healthy spine. Here is a brief look at four of the major abdominal muscles that make up your core (Wykle et al., 2011):

- **Transverse Abdominis** - The deepest of the abdominal muscles, it can have a tremendous effect on body posture. Its main roles are to stabilize the trunk and maintain internal abdominal pressure. You cannot touch this muscle from the outside.
- **Internal Obliques** - The second-deepest abdominal muscles sit on each side of the torso. They greatly affect body posture, yet slightly less so than the transverse abdominis because of their more superficial position. The internal obliques are responsible for rotation and lateral flexion of the spine.
- **External Obliques** - The external obliques are another pair of abdominal muscles located on either side of the torso. The external obliques are more superficial than the transverse abdominis and the internal obliques. Consequently, the external obliques have less effect on body posture.
- **Rectus Abdominis** - The rectus abdominis muscle is the most superficial of the abdominal muscles and is responsible for the six-pack in very fit people.
Section 4
Cueing and Teaching Techniques

A good instructor should be able to use his/her words, cues, and visualizations so that class participants, regardless of where they are positioned in the pool, can follow the exercise/routine and complete a successful workout with smooth transitions without being able to see you.

Remember that everyone learns, hears, and comprehends differently. There are a variety of ways to cue and many words that can be helpful in guiding your class. By letting your students know what is coming next in the sequence, you can help them execute smooth transitions and feel more confident (and successful) in their workouts.

Here are some of my favorite verbal cues:
- Ears over shoulders, over hips
- Create white water around your space
- Navel to spine
- Shoulders back and chest up
- Make waves
- Get off the ground…like a rocket!

“I’ve always said: You can’t teach spunk! Do you have what it takes? Are you a motivator? Will your voice, your mannerisms and your energy get your class going? It should!”

-Janice Jaicks
More Cueing

A cue is defined as a prompt or reminder. As an instructor, it is your job to constantly prompt students to execute movements and transitions throughout the sequence of their workouts. You must remind your students with quick, effective, visual or verbal signals what they are doing, how they should be doing it, and what they will be doing next.

We’ll talk about verbal cues in a moment, but visual clues are just as (if not more) important when we’re talking about pre-choreographed exercise classes. Because our class routines generally ‘flow’ without breaks to demonstrate the movements, we are essentially asking our students to hop right in and play Simon Says with us until the routine ‘clicks’ for them. Although this isn’t Aqua Zumba, we still use music, quick transitions, and rely on our participants to pick up on what’s happening by paying attention to our cues.

When facing the crowd, if you want them to have their right leg in front, then you will be demonstrating with your left leg. If your back is to your class (rare but sometimes necessary for demonstrating purposes), you will be using the same leg (right) as your students. This can get tricky!

Note: Above tips mostly apply to Intermediate Water Aerobics format.

Tips for Visual Cueing

- Your attitude and facial expressions are a crucial piece of visual cueing! If you’re not enjoying it, they’ll know. Make sure to smile and let your dynamic personality shine.
- Watch your students! If you see that class attendees are struggling or getting frustrated, slow it down, take a break to review the movements, or consider changing your routine. If they aren’t comfortable, they won’t come back!
- Make sure that your posture and alignment are correct, and use visual cues like pointing to the shoulders or touching the navel and spine as a reminder. Allowing participants to continue with poor technique is a disservice and could be considered negligence in certain situations (See Julie, 2014).

You will also have times when it is necessary or more effective to use verbal cues, although you must be careful not to overuse them. It is important to speak clearly and confidently, and keep it short and to the point. For example, if you are doing 8 to 12 repetitions of the Funky Chicken, you do not need to count each rep. Telling students how many reps are left midway through or ‘asking’ for two more reps is more appropriate. You may also find that your cueing takes on more of a motivational/coaching style, which is another great way to move your class along and keep the participants engaged in what you are doing.

Tips for Verbal Cueing

- Keep it simple. You’re not teaching history; you’re cueing an exercise class.
- Utilize phrases like, “You’ve got this!” “Keep going!” and “Almost there!” to keep the momentum going in your class.
- Laugh. Have fun! Give a shout and encourage your class to shout with you!
Deck vs. Water Teaching

While teaching in the water encourages camaraderie between you and your students, makes it easier to motivate using the water’s principles, and allows you to be more hands-on (plus keeps you cooler!), it is not always the best option for teaching water aerobics. Especially for new instructors, the allure of teaching in the water can be very strong; however, as an aquatic professional, you must decide how you will most effectively and successfully lead your class. If your students can’t see you and you can’t see them, your job is to teach on the deck! If you have a smaller class and are able to be in the pool, that’s great. Just remember, you are there for them.

When on deck, Aquatic Exercise Association President Julie See says, “If participants are to follow our movements to achieve fitness goals, then we have to demonstrate with precision to show length of lever, direction of power, speed of execution, range of motion, etc. Precise movements are also more motivating and engaging—you will command attention. This does not require full impact, but it does require full attention. One must learn to LEAD the workout, rather than ‘work out while leading.’ Learn to work smarter, not harder, to motivate and educate your clientele as they train successfully in the pool. Your chair (or the railing) is your best friend—not encouraging you to sit and observe the workout, but use the chair wisely to demonstrate.”

You do not need to perform every repetition of the move you want your students to execute. Demonstrate one or two moves, show a modification, cue, and motivate. You may need to demonstrate at each end of the pool, depending on the pool’s design. When demonstrating on deck, keep water tempo in mind.
**Posture and Alignment**

Proper posture and alignment should be taught and promoted in any aquatic exercise program. Correct posture refers to the alignment of the bones in relation to the joints.

Having the shoulders back, chest lifted, and navel in toward the spine in as many of the movements performed is typically the most effective and the most appropriate way to execute proper posture and alignment. As the instructor, you can visually check to ensure that your students’ shoulders are back and that they are lifting the chest, although you’ll most likely have to cue them on the navel!

Also, knees and elbows should not be locked when performing water aerobic exercises. “Soft” knees is a term often used; in other words, not locked or hyperextended.

**Posture and Alignment Tips**
- Keep reinforcing having the shoulders back
- Shoulders should be level (right and left should be even)
- Remind students frequently about navel to spine
- Cue ears over shoulders, shoulders over hips
- Remind to inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth
Transitions and Ways to Change Intensity

It is important that a water aerobics class flows. If your choreography doesn’t make sense, going from one movement to another can be awkward. Always try your movements first in the water to see if they transition smoothly.

For example, moving to the left from a right leg-leading Rocking Horse does not flow. Also, moving to the side (a grapevine) quickly for only four steps/four counts is simply not enough repetitions.

Due to the buoyancy properties of the water, one must create overload. Twelve to 20 repetitions of the same movement is a preferable range. Doing a movement for too much longer may not be safe and also tends to get boring for your class. That being said, when students are more advanced, 25 to 30 repetitions at the end of your class may be appropriate.

Ways to Change Intensity - make it easier, modify, or make it more challenging

● Change the speed of the move
● Travel (any and all directions; be sure to create balance)
● Change levers
● Change hand positions
● Use more power/resistance/intensity
● Create white water
● Change the impact

FUN FACT:

Combining Cross country ski, Leapin’ Lizards, the Mogul Ski, and then the Twist makes a GREAT sequence! This is a good example of transitions that make sense. Can you think of other transitions that logically work together?
Special Populations

Remember what your scope of practice and responsibility is when it comes to injury, disease and diagnosing someone. In other words, below are some simple things that you can suggest, but a doctor or therapist is the one who prescribes.

Older adults- may have trouble hearing or seeing you. They also may not love loud music!

Alzheimer's - someone with AD might have difficulty following instructions- be patient, repeat things at least 3X and do not get caught up in them doing everything perfectly!

Arthritis - depending upon where and how severe one’s arthritis is, suggestions could be for one to move deeper in the water, have warmer water, being mindful of impact being careful or avoiding equipment, using softer levers and easier hand positions (like a slice or closed fist).

Back Issues - suggest deeper water, softer knees, and how one impacts on the pool floor. Also when legs come to the back, be sure to lean forward to avoid hyperextension. Wear aqua shoes.

Shoulder Issues- suggest deeper water, avoid equipment or pay attention to hand positions, cue and keep an eye on the alignment, soft levers. Wear aqua shoes.

Prenatal - keeping baby submerged for the most part; jumping is okay if the doctor says this is fine, jumping extremely high might not be a great idea. Be mindful of anything that might hurt, or overexerting or getting the heart rate too high. One should have doctor approval. ACOG.org

Diabetes- encourage students to wear shoes (due to neuropathy) and not to overexert. Have sugar/candy ready if applicable.

Obesity- start slow and build. eventually get the person in the correct depth of water. Wear aqua shoes.
Intermediate Water Aerobics Dos & Don’ts

**DO**
- Warm up using short levers, in all directions
- Stand in chest-deep water
- Use the resistance of the water to create intensity
- Create the correct amount of overload/repetitions
- Land on the balls of your feet, then down to your heels when jogging
- Offer positive corrections
- Drink water during class

**DON’T**
- Start arms below the surface of the water and then ‘whip’ them out of the water
- Hyperextend your joints
- Begin with equipment
- Compare yourself with others
Movements & Diagrams

**Cross Country Ski** – Stand with one leg behind the other, knees bent, and spine/back is almost vertical. The weight of your back foot should be on the ball, and your front foot is flat. Move your legs and arms back and forth continuously. For variety, use any of the following arm movements to change the exercise: (1) move both arms at the same time without turning your palms, (2) move one arm at a time, (3) move both arms at the same time with turning your palms (4) bear claws, (5) punch, (6) punch with a twist, and (7) breaststroke.

**Rocking Horse** – The Rocking Horse is a very common move in water aerobics. I’ve created (okay, I borrowed from Jeanne Newkirk about 25 years ago!) four different rocking horses by simply changing the levers of the legs and changing the arm patterns. For simplicity, they have been named Level 1, 2, 3, 4. On all of the Rocking Horses, one leg remains in the front the entire time, while the other leg remains in the back.

**Rocking Horse: Level 1** – Bring your right knee to your chest as your draw your left heel to your butt like a hamstring curl. Move your arms in a ‘figure eight.”

**Rocking Horse: Level 2** – Keep your right leg straight and do a hamstring curl with your left leg. Keep your arms straight. Move your arms backward as your front leg moves forward. This incorporates the law of action/reaction, plus some excellent core work.

**Rocking Horse: Level 3** – Do the same movement as above, with right leg bent, left leg straight, and arms straight.

**Rocking Horse: Level 4** – With legs and arms straight, split your legs in the water, one moving forward and one moving backward, as you draw your arms all the way back behind you until they reach the end of their range of motion. The long levers make this movement the most powerful of the rocking horse variations.

**Leapin’ Lizard** - With legs and feet together, jump slightly forward with both feet while cupping your hands and pushing the water back with your arms. Then jump back as you ‘pull’
the water forward. Let your arms do the majority of the work. Keep your arms close to your body. For a greater challenge, do the movement with your arms away from your body.

Mogul Ski - Keep your legs together and feet facing the wall in front of you. With fingers facing the pool floor, push the water to one side, causing your legs to move to the opposite side. Let your arms do most of the work. Don’t twist your body.

Twist - Twist your body in the water by turning your knees to the right as you push your arms to the left. Then turn your knees to the left as you push your arms to the right. The twisting motion should come from your abdominal oblique muscles rather than from your lower back muscles. This movement should be performed cautiously and slowly. Monitor your students’ execution of the twist.

Frog Legs - With back fairly straight and heels directly underneath you, separate both knees and lift legs off the pool floor as you exhale.

Breaststroke Arms - With thumbs up, arms extended, and palms together, draw a heart, keeping your elbows back and squeezing your shoulder blades together. Extend your arms back to return to the starting position.
**Football Pass Arms** - With arms extended and palms facing downward, power your arms down toward your body. Power arms back to return to the starting position. To modify, push arms up and down with elbows bent.

![Football Pass Arms](image)

**Cheerleader** – With legs apart, propel off the pool floor. Keep legs straight on the way up, and bend them slightly when you land to protect your joints. Clap your hands together with fingers reaching the floor, or clap your hands above your head.

![Cheerleader](image)

**Basketball Shoot** – Standing on the balls of your feet, jump up and ‘shoot a ball’ into the basket. Land softly.

**Bunny Hop** - With knees and feet together, jump off the pool floor as you exhale and scoop the water with your arms as if you’re digging a hole or draw your arms down as if you’re closing a garage door.

**Dig a Hole Arms** - Scoop the water with your arms as if you’re digging a hole.

**Garage Door Arms** - With both arms overhead, contract your biceps as you draw your arms down in front of you. Contract your biceps throughout the movement and keep your arms out of the water.

**Soccer Kick** – With back straight, arms extended to the sides, and palms facing downward, lift your right heel toward your left hand as your left hand uses the water’s resistance to reach toward your foot. Lower the leg and raise your arm to the starting position and repeat with the
other leg and arm. Don’t lean over to reach your feet. The more power the inside foot has to ‘kick the soccer ball’ upward, the more the inner thigh will be working.

Soccer Kick to the Back:

**Golf Swing** – With arms extended to the sides and hands open, extend your hand to meet your calf or ankle. Return to the starting position and repeat with the other leg and arm. For greater intensity, open your hand wider to create a larger surface area. The core really engages if this move is done correctly.
Intermediate Water Aerobics Choreography

Warm Up:
Legs to the front, bent knees and slicing hands, bent elbows (short levers)
Legs to corners (short levers)
Pendulums (feet flexed/arms and legs are opposite): action/reaction
Legs to the rear; feet flexed (lean forward to protect the back)

Jogging with upper body stretch; arm across chest
Jogging with shoulder rolls, both directions
Angry cat stretch, while jogging
Chest stretch (hands clasped behind back), while jogging

Aerobic Portion:
Legs to front, long levers (straight knees, straighter elbows) open palms, turning palms up on the way to top of the water, turning palms down on the way to pool floor
Legs to corners (long levers)
Pendulums with feet pointed
Repeat

Rotator cuff arms with jog
Add jacks
Pec arms with jog (straight arms reach all the way out to side, pull water in to front of body, straight, strong wrists)
Add jacks with pec arms
Repeat

Cross Country Ski (with both arms together, push water to the back with open hands, all the way back to triceps extension, then return with straight arms)
*Cross Country Options: Try different arm patterns (see page....
Leapin’ Lizards
Mogul Ski
Twist
Repeat

Cross Country Ski
Rocking Horse Level 1 (right leg leads)
Legs to front, toes pointed
Pendulum (legs to side; opposite arm patterns with legs, feet flexed)
Legs to back
Legs to back corners
Legs to front corners
Legs to front, feet flexed
Rocking Horse (left leg leads)

Soccer kick
Golf swing
Soccer kick
Soccer kick to back
Jump jacks (arms in back)
Soccer kick to back
Soccer kick to front
Jump jack (big arms)
Cheerleader

Jog it out
Push water forward with flexed hands
Breaststroke arms
Reverse arm circles
Repeat

Breaststroke arms with jog
Add frog legs
Side-to-side pattern
Jog it out

Single knee lift
Double knee lift
Repeat

Frog jump (football pass arms)
Bunny hop
Repeat
Add basketball shoot
Repeat
Add cheerleader
Other options include arms out of the water for frog, bunny, and cheerleader
Intermediate Water Aerobics Choreography (Progressions)

Warm Up:
Jog (land balls of your feet, then down to your heels) with bicep and triceps arms
Legs to front with soft knees, slicing arms
Legs to front with straight knees, long lever arms; turning palms
Pendulums; legs to the side feet flexed, opposite arms push and pull the water
Pendulums; legs to the side feet pointed, opposite arms push and pull the water
Jog rolling shoulders, shrugging shoulders, shoulders forward and back
Jog circling wrists in both directions

Cardio/Aerobic Portion:
Legs to corners, slicing hands, then progress to cupping hands
Jog
Jump jacks with slicing hands, then progress to big cupping hands
Cheerleader (legs start apart, followed by adduction; toward midline; feet come off the ground)
12-15 reps
Jump jacks repeat above arms
Cheerleader 15-20 reps
Jog
Straddle (arms under the water; turn palms outward for tricep extension) 12-15 reps (legs start together, followed by abduction; away from midline)
Jog
Straddle 15-20 reps with arms out of the water (triceps extension)
Cross country ski slicing arm
Cross country ski bear claw arms
Legs to the back, feet flexed, long arm levers
Legs to back corners, long arm levers
Pendulums toes pointed
Pendulums feet flexed
Leapin’ Lizards slicing arms
Mogul Ski slicing arms

Continued Choreography
Leapin’ Lizards, ‘bear claw’ hands
Mogul Ski, ‘bear claw’ hands
Mogul Ski, wide legged, cupped hands
Jacks, slicing in front
Jacks, slicing in back
Jacks, front and back, add cupping hands and bear claws
Frogs with hands on hips
Frogs, bent elbows, up and down
Frogs, breaststroke arms
Frogs, football pass arms
Frogs, arms out of the water
**Aqua Tabata**

**Tabata training** is one of the most popular forms of high-intensity interval training (HIIT). It consists of eight rounds of high-intensity exercises for 20 seconds with 10 seconds of recovery. Much research has been done on interval training and its tremendous benefits for burning calories and boosting one’s metabolism. Tabata was discovered by Japanese Scientist Dr. Izumi Tabata and a team of researchers from the National Institute of Fitness and Sports in Tokyo. Tabata’s study, which was done using a stationary bicycle, found that repeating short sprints with very short recovery intervals increases both anaerobic and aerobic fitness.

You may choose to do the same move for all eight rounds or you may mix it up. Remember that even changing an arm position changes the move. I suggest you don’t change the move too often since you’re trying to create overload so that the participant fatigues and builds endurance. During each longer recovery between Tabata set (8 rounds of 20-second work/10-second recovery), which may be one or two minutes, explain, demonstrate, and cue the next Tabata set. If you use equipment, have the equipment ready on the deck close to the student’s spot.

Although the moves you can use for the workout are limitless, if you want to create a more challenging class, choose your movements wisely.
Aqua Tabata Sample Workout

Warm-up (5 minutes)

**Tabata 1**
Jogging with breaststroke arms
Option: High knee jogs with ‘freestyle’ arms

**Tabata 2**
Jump Jacks *(first four rounds)*
Add Cheerleaders *(final four rounds)*

**Tabata 3** *(have buoys close by)*
Cross Country Ski with Buoys
Option: Leapin’ Lizard with Buoys

**Tabata 4**
Frog Jump with ‘Football Pass’ arms
Bunny Hop with ‘garage door’ arms *(out of the water)*

**Tabata 5**
Russian Cossack Kicks

**Tabata 6**
Double Knee Lift with Buoys

**Tabata 7**
Around the clocks 12:00/9:00/6:00/3:00
Suspended move with bending/extending legs in all four directions

**Tabata 8**
Mountain Climbers *(at wall)*

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Aqua Tabata Sample Workout – Strength vs Cardio
Warm-up (5 minutes)

**Tabata 1**
Frogs (breaststroke arms 2 rounds)
Frogs (football pass arms 2 rounds)
Frogs (lat pulls arms out of the water final 4 rounds)

**Tabata 2**
Noodle push down- suspended; prone-position (first four rounds/cycles)
Noodle circles “” “” (final four rounds, 2 in each direction)

**Tabata 3**
Straddle (first four rounds/cycles)
Cheerleader (final four rounds/cycles)

**Tabata 4**
Pecs with band (first four rounds/cycles)
Triceps with band (final four rounds- 2 each side)
**Option:** With Buoys, arms extended to the side; buoys go down to side, slowly rise up to surface of water- Athletic stance

**Tabata 5**
Hitch-kick (four rounds)
Basketball shoot (four rounds)

**Tabata 6**
Plank position – right leg back; one buoy; right arm starts at top of water- bring buoy down to right side of body, slowly up to surface (four rounds)
Repeat left side (four rounds)

**Tabata 7**
Flutter kicks to the side; Noodle for suspension (four rounds each side)

**Tabata 8**
Mountain Climbers (at wall)

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**Posture and Alignment**
• When suspended, the noodle should be placed under arms near your shoulder blades, and shoulders should not be impinged
• Shoulders should be relaxed
• Shoulders should be level (with each other)
• Be mindful of the “type” of noodle the individual requires
• For standing abdominal work, the body should be at a ‘plank’ position. Very little hyperextension. Chin close to the water, navel to spine.

Transitions

As with all workout programs, start slow and build. If the abdominal format is the second half of your workout, the body is already warmed up. If you are creating a core-only routine, you may want to revisit your warm-up. Perhaps start with hip flexor work and then build to the more intense core work that we have designed for you in our program.

An example could be doing a ‘half-funky chicken,’ followed by a full-funky chicken, followed by a spunky chicken, and so on.

The desert snow angel, if you choose this more advanced move, should definitely be toward the end of your core workout.
Core Work Dos & Don’ts

DO
● Focus on your breath
● Focus on your navel to spine
● Start slow and build if you are new
● Understand your limitations

DON’T
● Overextend yourself
● Hyperextend
● Go too far back with your legs while suspended if you’re pregnant
● Use your hip flexors and assume it is abdominal work
Core Work Choreography

Suspended Core Work

Funky Chicken  8-12 repetitions

Spunky Chicken  8-12 repetitions

The Bell  8-12 repetitions

The Pendulum  8-12 repetitions

Desert Snow Angel (advanced students only)  6-8 repetitions

Two Noodle Ab Crunch  6 repetitions each side/switch partners

Standing Core Work (with Hydro-Fit or Monster Noodle extended in front of you):

Plank  hold for 30+ seconds

Plank  hold 15-30 seconds

Plank  8-12 repetitions

Plank  8-12 repetitions

Suspended Hold  15-30 seconds

Suspended Hold with Push-Up  8-12 repetitions

Side Plank  hold 15-30 seconds

Side Plank with Push-Up (bring noodle in closer to your body)  8-12 repetitions

Switch Sides
Movements & Diagrams

**Funky Chicken** - With legs and feet together, extend to front, bend knees, and tuck. Extend legs to rear, bend, and tuck. Extend to front. Point toes at each end of extension of legs.

![Funky Chicken](image1)

**Spunky Chicken** - As above, tuck underneath and extend legs to the side, tuck, and extend to the other side (pointing toes at each side).

![Spunky Chicken](image2)
**The Bell** - With the bottom of your feet together and knees apart, move your legs forward, to the center, back, to the center, and forward. Try to keep your abdominal muscles stable. Primary muscle: rectus abdominis.

**Side angle:**

**The Pendulum** - With the bottom of your feet together and knees apart, move your legs to the side, to the center, to the other side, to the center, and to the other side. Try to keep your core muscles stable and shoulders in one place. Primary muscle: obliques.

**Desert Snow Angel** – With your legs together and straight out in front of you, spread your legs to form a V shape and lower your legs and pull them behind you. Be careful to not hyperextend your back. Then bring legs together, and then apart again as you bring your legs back in front of you and then bring them together again to complete the movement.
Standing Core Work with Hydro-Fit (or Monster) Noodle extended in front of you:

**Plank** - Slide right leg back on the ball of the foot and hold the stretch; repeat with left leg.

**Plank** - Push noodle down and hold the isometric contraction.

**Plank** - Bring noodle in closer toward the body and do a push-up.

**Plank** - Hold noodle down and move noodle from side to side without moving the rest of body.

**Suspended Hold with Push-Up**: Bring elbows up and squeeze shoulder blades together, then push down.
**Side Plank** - Lean to the right and hold noodle with arm extended.

**Side Plank with Push-Up** - Bring noodle in closer to your body. Push up and down. Repeat with other side.
Resources

FitnessFest Events
663 W. 2nd Ave., Ste. 14
Mesa, AZ 85210
(480) 461-3888
Email: info@fitnessfest.org
Website: www.FitnessFest.org

Aquatic Exercise Association (AEA)
PO Box 1609
Nokomis, FL 34274
(888) 232-9283
Email: info@aeawesome.com
Website: http://www.aeawesome.com

Hydro-Fit, Inc.
(800) 346-7295
Email: http://www.hydrofit.com/customer-support/
Website: www.hydrofit.com
Janice Jaicks has been an aquatic fitness professional since 1985, when she founded Waterworks On Wheels, Inc. She is a children’s swim instructor and owner of Desert Swim School (formerly Waterworks), where her swim program serves hundreds of children and adults in the Phoenix area. She is also an aquatic group exercise instructor at StaFit Gym (formerly Fitness Forum) in Chandler, Arizona, where she has taught classes for twenty years.

Janice is a continuing education provider for ACE, AFAA, NASM, and AEA. She has presented her aqua trainings at many national fitness industry conferences, including IDEA, SCW, IAFC, AquaCon, and FitnessFest.

Janice is the founder of FitnessFest Conference & Expo, AquaCon, Desert Moon Endeavors Retreats and Desert Swim School. Since 1997, FitnessFest has provided continuing education to thousands of group exercise and aqua instructors, personal trainers, and mind/body professionals throughout the U.S.

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