

Great Summer Workouts -- Just Add Water

With warm weather season now in full gear, exercisers want to take their workouts outside and breakout of their indoor fitness ruts.

But, when temperatures reach record highs and humidity levels soar, traditional outdoor workouts become less appealing. So how can you stay cool while still enjoying outdoor physical activity? One word – water. Water exercises are the perfect way to workout under the sun without overheating. You can get a total body workout without even breaking a sweat!



And don't worry if you aren't a veteran swimmer. Aquatic workouts aren't limited to just swimming. There are many other forms of pool exercises. You don't even have to be a regular exerciser to try aquatic fitness. One of the great things about working out in the water is that even fitness novices can easily perform many of the moves.

It's also an excellent fitness choice for all ages, from the very young to seniors. Water exercise is a very good way to burn calories, improve your strength and flexibility, tone-up, improve your cardiovascular system, and just get more fit overall. And, the types of workouts are practically endless. Most land exercises can be modified and re-created in water.

Other benefits include:

- lower injury risk
- less sweating
- works your entire body
- challenges your body in a very different way than it is accustomed to
- refreshing way to workout
- water provides natural resistance so no equipment is needed
- can increase/decrease intensity (difficulty) simply by alternating between shallow and deep areas
- good low-impact exercise choice for pregnant women - reduces joint compression and downward gravity pull (in other words ? easier on the joints)
- even people who can't exercise on land can often exercise in the water
- excellent rehabilitation exercise for people recovering from an injury
- less stress on bones and muscles
- great option for people with arthritis

Plus, water workouts also provide a fun and more socially interactive exercise option. For example, parents can enjoy time at the pool with their children while also fitting in some of their weekly workout sessions. Aquatic aerobic classes also provide a social, group-setting alternative.

Still not convinced that an aquatic workout will challenge your body as well as some of the more common workouts like walking or jogging? Well, try some of the sample exercise below and you'll probably quickly change your mind. But, don't judge the workout solely on how high your heart rate gets. Keep in mind that swimmers generate a slightly lower heart rate when compared to cyclists and runners. This does not imply that they aren't working as hard. Experts equate the lower heart rate partially to the effect of immersion in a relatively cool environment.

Water Exercises

Swim/Walk interval laps: Swim 1-2 laps (use any swim form you prefer: crawl, backstroke, etc.). Walk 1-2 laps in the pool. Repeat sequence 4-6 times.

Water Squats: Stand in the water with feet about hip-width apart. Bend your knees slightly as you push your hips back as if you are sitting on a chair. Keep your knees behind your toes. Return to start position and repeat. The water provides extra resistance and makes this move more challenging.

Wave Jumps (for those with access to the ocean or a wave-simulator): Stand in knee-deep or less water. Each time a wave comes attempt to jump over it. Note: this is a more advanced move that requires good balance and strong swimming skills. Do not attempt this move unless you have experience swimming in waves.

Water Jogging: Can be done with the use of flotation devices where your feet don't touch the ground or the traditional way of actually jogging in the water.

For a more comprehensive list of water workouts and more detailed instructions for the above exercises, visit: workoutsforyou.com/water.htm

Remember, you should always consult your physician before trying any new exercise programs.

About the Author...

Copyright 2003. Lynn Bode, author and certified personal trainer, offers her services through WorkoutsForYou.com. WorkoutsForYou provides online exercise programs to help people get more fit. Visit: <http://www.workoutsforyou.com> for a free sample workout.

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