

The “Dog Days of Summer” are upon us. There are few better ways to beat the heat than to jump in the pool. Water exercise has become more and more popular, and not just for swimming. Swimming provides a great cardiovascular workout. However, if you are bored with swimming lap after lap, check out some other exercises that you can do in the pool.

Most exercises that you do on land can be done in some shape or form in the water. The biggest difference is that you are no longer working against gravity, but instead working against the water. The water partially supports the weight of the individual. Also, in water exercise the movements are slowed down, so exercisers are much less likely to injure. For many people water exercise is the best way for them to workout. Water supports the joints and encourages free movement making it a great alternative for people with arthritis, back pain, and/or muscle or joint issues. It is also safer and more comfortable for pregnant women and overweight individuals.

Below are a few exercises you can try out on your own.

TONING ARMS: Stand with the feet apart, arms extended straight in front of you holding a ball. Breathing rhythmically push the ball under the water, and swing it into a figure-of-eight pattern through the water. Feel the varying resistance on the arms and upper body. Move in as smooth a rhythm as you can making sure not to strain your shoulders or back. Try maintaining a sturdy balance and repeat 10 times.

(Note: If you are recovery from a shoulder injury, do not practice this exercise in the absence of a therapist).

TONING CHEST AND BACK: To begin stand or kneel in water that is up to your shoulders. Take your arms out to the side at shoulder height so that they are parallel to the ground, keeping a slight bend in the elbows. Using the water as resistance, drag your hands in front of you squeezing the chest muscles then reverse the movement and squeeze your back muscles to drag the arms to your sides. The arms stay parallel to the ground the entire time.

WATER MARCHING: To begin with stand up straight breathing evenly, make continuous strides as if marching on the spot, extending arms and legs as far as you can . The resistance created by water will keep the march in slow motion. Stretch your limbs to the full, pointing your toes and pulling your arms vigorously back and forth. Start with 2 minutes or so or as long as it makes you slightly breathless. Simply aim for a good rhythmic walking movement.

JUMPING JACKS: This exercise will be greatly affected by your fitness level, so if you are a beginner do not get disappointed by the result. With practice however you will be able to perform this exercise. Start with your feet flat on the bottom of the pool and your arms relaxed by your sides. Bend your knees and spring up off the bottom of the pool as high as you can. As you jump, kick your legs out to the sides pointing your toes down and swinging your arms out to the side and up above your head so that your limbs form a star shape. Land with knees bent and feet apart . Once again jump up as high as you can and bring your feet back and together with arms by your sides. Repeat this procedure for 10 times.

WAIST TRIMMER: With your back against the poolside, arm along the edge for support, draw the knees to your chest. Extend your legs straight ahead. Inhaling, swing legs to your left and then to your right and back to the center. As you exhale move legs to front and withdraw to chest. Repeat this for 10 times. All through the motion keep your back pressed against the wall.

TOTAL BODY STRETCH: Facing the side of the pool, grip on to the edge with your hands. Bend your knees and press your feet against the poolside as you inhale. While exhaling, move hips back. Take care not to lock your knees or elbows or strain your back. Repeat 10 times.

STANDING KICKBACKS: Stand an arms-length way from the pool wall. Keep your shoulders relaxed, your feet together and arms hanging by your sides. Breathe normally. Rest both of your hands against the pool side at shoulder height. Keep your arms straight. Bend your knees a little, tucking in your bottom as you do so. Using your buttock and thigh muscles, raise your left leg and swing it gently back. Keep the supporting leg bent a little and don't raise your leg too high. Repeat 5 times with each leg.

LEG ADDUCTION AND ABDUCTION: Stand with your back pressed to the pool side, hold on to the rod (against the wall of the pool) for support. Keeping your back straight raise your legs (similarly as in Waist Trimmer). Try spreading out your legs with minimum strain on the back. Move your legs only from the hip joint. Now draw your legs simultaneously and smoothly together into the middle.

The performance of the exercises mentioned above will depend greatly upon you general health & fitness level. Always warm-up and stretch out before practicing these exercises. Be sure to cool down and stretch as well as replenish your fluids after water exercising just as you would with any other form of exercise. There is no doubt that swimming combined with these exercises will add variety and fun to your cardio workout.

If you would like more information on water exercise speak with the aquatics director and see the fall brochure to see when classes are starting up. You can also visit: <http://www.womenfitness.net/fitinwater.htm>

Have a Great August!

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