Aquatic Exercises: Aerobic Lower Body Strengthening

These exercises will strengthen the muscles in your legs, hips, abdomen and buttocks, as well as your heart and lungs. Exercising in water allows you to have less stress on your joints. When you exercise in water that comes up to your neck, your joints are only supporting about 10 percent of your body weight.

Do these exercises with your spine in a neutral position. Find this by standing with your feet about shoulder width apart. Stand with your knees slightly bent and your weight evenly distributed. Tighten your stomach muscles and you should feel balanced. Keep your stomach muscles tightened during all the exercises.

If you feel any of these signs of fatigue, stop exercising and tell the therapist or lifeguard you need help.

- Trouble catching your breath or feel short of breath
- Faint, lightheaded or dizzy
- Nausea
- Red face or feel flushed
- Pain or pressure in chest or upper body
- Weakness or suddenly feel tired
- Pounding heart or irregular heart beat
- Confusion or loss of sense of direction
Strengthening Exercises

Be sure to breathe while you exercise. Never hold your breath when you exercise.

Stand in water about shoulder height, unless otherwise noted, or as directed by your therapist.

Do each exercise slowly with smooth movements and repeat _____ times, or ____________ minutes.

- Walk forward in the water.

- Walk backward in the water.

- Walk sideways in the water, and then walk back the other direction to where you started.
1. Step out to the side with your left foot, then step your right foot across in front of your left foot.

2. Step out to the side again with your left foot, then step your right foot across behind your left foot.

3. Go back in the other direction, alternating crossing in front then behind the other foot.

Slide one foot out in front of you and swing the opposite arm in front of you while the other foot and arm go to the back. Keep your elbows straight.

You may need to move to deeper water for this exercise so you do not scrape your feet.

1. Bend 2 floatation noodles around your chest or waist, depending on how deep the water is.

2. Pedal your legs like you are riding a bicycle. Point your toes when your foot goes down.
☐ This exercise is done in deeper water with the floatation belt. Move your arms and legs like you are jogging.

☐ Do this exercise in deeper water with the floatation belt on.
   1. Hold your arms out at shoulder level to help you stay upright.
   2. Keep your knees straight and push your legs out to the sides, then pull them back in to the center.
1. Start by standing in the water with your arms at your sides.
   2. Kick your legs out and lift your arms out to your sides, keeping your knees and elbows straight.
   3. Pull your legs back to the center and bring your arms back down to your sides.

   ![Diagram of exercise 1 and 2]

4. March in place. Lift your knee up high and push your opposite arm out in front of you.

   ![Diagram of exercise 3 and 4]
Use a kick board or hold onto the side of the pool for this exercise. Float on your stomach and kick your legs. Point your toes and keep your legs fairly straight. Be sure you are moving your leg from the hip.

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.