Aquatic Exercises: Upper Body Strengthening

These exercises will strengthen your muscles in your arms, shoulders, chest and neck. Exercising in water allows you to have less stress on your joints. When you exercise in water that comes up to you 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.

- Have 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
- Very weak or sudden tiredness
- Pounding heart or irregular heart beat
- Confusion or loss of sense of direction

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Strengthening Exercises

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

Stand in water about shoulder height with your feet apart and knees slightly bent for these exercises, unless otherwise noted.

Do each exercise slowly with smooth movement and repeat ______ times.

☐ 1. Start with your arms at your sides, thumbs facing forward.
   2. Lift both arms forward to chest level.
   3. Return to the starting position and repeat.

☐ 1. Hold your arms out to your sides at chest level with your elbows straight and thumbs up.
   2. Push your arms in, keeping your arms straight until your hands meet in front of you.
   3. Then pull your arms back to your sides at chest level.
1. Stand with your arms at your sides.
   
   2. Bend your elbows up to 90 degrees and keep your arms close to your body with your thumbs up.
   
   3. Push your hands out to your sides and feel your shoulders move.
   
   4. Bring your hands back to the starting position, keeping your elbows close to your body.

1. Start with your arms at your sides, palms facing forward.
   
   2. Bend your elbows up, bringing your hands towards your shoulders.
   
   3. Push your hands back down to the starting position.

1. Start with your arms crossed in front of you at waist level, thumbs up and arms close to your body.
   
   2. Push your arms out to your sides with elbows bent at 90 degrees, then pull them back in so they cross in front of your stomach.
1. Stand with your arms down at your sides and your palms facing forward.

2. Bend your elbows and bring your hands up through the water to your chest.

3. Turn your palms to face down and push your arms back down until they are straight by your sides.

1. Lift both arms up and out to your sides to shoulder level.

2. Keep your arms straight and pull your arms down through the water to your legs.

3. Then pull your arms back up to your sides to shoulder level, keeping your arms straight.
1. Lift both arms up and out to your sides to shoulder level.

2. Bring your arms forward and cross in front of your body to give yourself a hug.

3. Take your arms back out to the starting position, and feel the squeeze as you bring your shoulder blades back together.

1. Lift both arms up to shoulder level and bend your elbows 90 degrees so your hands are in front of you.

2. Bring your hands across in front of you and give yourself a hug.

3. Return to the starting position, keeping your elbows up near shoulder level.

1. Bring your arms up at your sides to shoulder level, bending your elbows up.

2. Pull your arms in front of your face, keeping hands up.

3. Push your arms back to the starting position.
1. Reach your hands behind your back and cross the palms of your hands.
2. Push your elbows forward and then back, like flapping your wings.

1. Reach your hands up and cross your palms behind your head.
2. Push your elbows forward and then pull them back, like flapping your wings.

1. With your arms at your sides, bend your elbows up to 90 degrees.
2. Swing your arms up through the water.
3. Swing your arms back down to your sides, keeping your elbows bent.
1. Stand with your arms straight down at your sides.
2. Roll your shoulders forward.
3. Repeat rolling your shoulders back.

1. Stand with your arms down at your sides.
2. Slowly shrug your shoulders up and back like they are going behind your ears.

1. Stand with your arms at your sides, hands turned out to your sides with palms down.
2. Pull your shoulders up and then punch your arms down in the water so your shoulders move down under the water.
1. For this exercise, hold onto the side of the pool or a bar and bend your legs so your feet are behind you and you are floating.

2. Cross one arm over the other as you pull yourself along the side of the pool or bar.

3. Go back in the other direction, crossing your other arm over this time.

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.