Aquatic Therapy

Aquatic therapy is an exercise program done in a heated swimming pool. Physical and occupational therapists use this type of rehab program to enhance, restore, maintain and increase a person’s ability to function.

**Exercising in water:**
- Lessens the effect of gravity on the joints so there is less stress on the weight bearing joints, like your knees and hips
- Provides comfort from the warm water
- Provides support to let you move, stretch, walk and strengthen your muscles and joints
- Helps you progress to exercise on land

**Benefits of aquatic therapy**
Aquatic programs are tailored for each person. All programs will allow you to:
- Improve your muscle strength and tone
- Increase your heart and lung strength and fitness
- Reduce stress
- Decrease swelling
- Improve your blood flow
• Increase your strength and endurance
• Increase your range of motion and flexibility

What makes aquatic therapy a good form of exercise?
• Buoyancy, the tendency to float, gives your body support in the water. It lessens the gravity forces on joints that may not be able to bear as much weight out of the water. This lets you move better and lessens stress on your muscles, joints and bones.
• The heated water relaxes your muscles. This improves the range of motion in your joints.
• There is hydrostatic pressure formed by the water around your body. This helps your blood to circulate from your legs to your heart. This can reduce swelling in the joints, lessen joint tenderness, and improve your joint range of motion.
• The resistance you get in the water improves your strength and balance. It can also increase your sensory awareness so you know where your joint is in space.

Who can benefit from aquatic therapy?
Most people can benefit from this type of exercise but people with certain medical conditions should not take part in aquatic therapy. Talk to your doctor and therapist about whether this type of treatment would be good for you.

People with injuries, pain, limited range of motion, weakness, arthritis, or total joint replacement can often gain strength and greater range of motion with less pain with this treatment.

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.