Aquatic therapy is an exercise program done in a heated swimming pool. Physical and occupational therapists use this type of rehabilitation (rehab) program to improve a person's strength and movement. Programs are tailored for each person.

**Exercising in Water**
- Lessens gravity forces on joints that may not be able to bear as much weight out of the water
- Improves your range of motion, as heated water relaxes muscles
- Provides support to let you move, stretch, walk and strengthen your muscles and joints
- Helps you progress to exercising on land

**Benefits of Aquatic Therapy**
- Improves your muscle strength and tone
- Increases your heart and lung strength
- Increases your fitness level and endurance
- Reduces stress
- Decreases swelling
- Improves blood flow
- Increases your range of motion and flexibility

**Safety First**
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 or irregular heart beat
- Confusion or loss of sense of direction

**Benefits of pressure and resistance**
Pressure from the water around your body helps your blood to circulate from your legs to your heart. This can reduce swelling in the joints, lessen joint tenderness. The resistance you get in the water improves your strength and balance. It can also increase your awareness of your body so you know where your joint is in space.

**Who benefits**
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 than other therapy.

While most people can benefit, people with certain medical conditions should not do aquatic therapy. Talk to your doctor and therapist about whether this type of treatment would be good for you.