AQUA AEROBICS: TOP TEN BASIC MOVES

If you like being in the water but get bored swimming up and down lanes, or just want to vary your routine, consider trying some pool exercises. Water exercises can also be safer and more comfortable for pregnant women and for people who are overweight or suffer from arthritis, back pain or muscle or joint problems. Since your weight is partially supported and your movements slowed down, you are much less likely to injure yourself. Try the exercises here as a starter— if you enjoy them, consider joining a class.

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 without straining 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).

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.

SIDE STRETCH: Stand sideways to the pool wall holding onto the edge with arm fully extended, and feet flat on the pool floor. Inhale as you extend the outside arm overhead as in Posterior Shoulder stretch. Exhale as you lean hips away from poolside. Do 10 times on each side.
**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. View yourself as performing the Sitting Quadricep Stretch with both legs.

**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. For instructions to perform this exercise outside the pool, click here.

**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.

**CRUNCH:** Once out of the pool, spread out a mat or even your towel on a straight bench. Your knees should be bent and feet flat on the floor. Rest four fingers lightly on the side of your head, around your ears. Lift your shoulders and head so that you can see your knees for a moment. Return to the starting position gradually. Repeat about 10 times.

**FLOATING ON WATER:** Relaxation is an essential aspect of completing an exercise routine. Let your body lose and let it float on water. You will be amazed, besides proving as an essential sport, swimming also lets you relax.

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. There is no doubt that swimming combined with these exercises will add variety and fun to your cardio workout.