

Name/Title: Water Fitness

Purpose of Event: To provide students with an innovative and refreshing approach to fitness that can serve as a lifetime activity.

Prerequisites: Students should be able to swim and be comfortable in a pool.

Suggested Grade Level: 9-12

Materials Needed: None required, but fitness sessions can be enhanced by kickboards, water jugs, fins, specialized water resistant equipment, and music.

Organization:

Groups of 30-50 depending on pool size

Description of Idea

The following is an abbreviated sample of a generic six-part lesson plan (warm-up, stretching, pre-cardio, cardio, toning, cool-down) that can be used to enhance the fitness portion of your physical education aquatics program. Each lesson part contains a few samples of exercises commonly used. After a repertoire of basic water concepts and movements has been mastered, teachers can begin to experiment with specialized workout formats (circuit, interval, cross-training) as well as adding a variety of innovations (novel fitness routines, line dancing, water games) in the pool.

Warm-up: Consider posting task cards to list the desired warm-up exercises for the day. This allows students to engage in activity immediately upon entry into the swimming pool and without teacher direction. While students are warming up, teachers can easily handle administrative tasks such as taking roll, student notes, and non-dressers. Below are a few simple ideas that can be posted:

- 2 laps forward walk
- 2 laps giant strides backward
- 2 laps forward jog
- 2 laps choice

Stretching: After students have been instructed on appropriate stretching exercises, they can begin to lead this portion of the lesson using squad formations or other instructional patterns (scattered, stations, partners). Below are a sample of some major muscle groups to consider:

- Calf (one or two feet at a time)
- Quadriceps (standing while holding on to pool wall)

- Obliques (standing with arms stretching in opposition)
- Shoulders (shrugs)

*Tip - Keeping as much of the body submerged as possible during the stretching time will help prevent students from getting cold.

Pre-Cardio: Because the body's cardiovascular system has cooled down somewhat from the stretching portion of the lesson, the pre-cardio segment is designed to gradually prepare the body for the upcoming cardio exercises. Include movements that stimulate major, rather than minor, muscle groups and progressively build in tempo. Below are a few suggestions:

- Marching in place
- Move across pool using side slides
- Jogging in place (knees in front/heels up in back)with various arm movements (curls, presses)
- Jumping jacks with arms just below the surface

Cardio: This portion of the lesson should elevate the heart rate considerably. Encourage students to reach their target heart rate ranges. Below are a few specific exercises designed for the water:

- Cross country skiers (simulate what it looks like on land)
- Rocking horses (use a split stance and continuously rock from the front leg onto the back leg while arm sweep from front to back)
- Jumps with shoulders in the water moving forward/backward
- Side kicks(similar to quick leg lifts) with arms sweeping across the front of the body

*Tips - Use jogging as a transition step when switching to a new exercise. Utilizing equipment during the cardio and toning portions of the lesson ensures that the body has been thoroughly warmed up before additional resistance is added. Other equipment pieces may include kickboards, water jugs, jog belts, webbed gloves, and dynabands.

Toning: This is a specific part of the workout designed for toning particular muscle groups/body areas. Below are some sample toning exercises with and without equipment:

- Leg lifts (front, side, and back)
- Press a kickboard under water (in front of body, on the side, or behind)
- Abdominal crunches (use a kickboard under each arm to suspend body while floating on back)
- Tidal waves (push ups at the pool wall)

*Tip - Be sure to tone both sets of opposing muscle groups (triceps/biceps)and give equal attention to both sides of the body (right/left)

Cool-down: Gentle stretching, slower locomotor patterns, and easy dance moves can be used during this time. Visualization while in a position of comfort (floating or supported) is also a possibility. Below are a few examples of cool-down activities:

- 2 laps of long side slides
- 2 laps choice
- Water angels (just like the ones you do in the snow)
- Stationary back float with relaxation tips from teacher

Sample Specialized Workout Format Circuit: Use music to guide small groups through any number of stations lasting 5-7 minutes each. Examples of stations can be:

- Stationary kicking at pool wall (quadriceps/hamstrings endurance and strengthening)
- Arm curls and extensions using water barbells (biceps/triceps endurance and strengthening)
- Vertical streamline stretch (abdominal flexibility)
- Stationary sprinting intervals (cardiovascular)

Novel Fitness Routine Race Track Fitness: Set up several fitness stations around the perimeter of the pool. Divide students into partners and place two to three sets of partners at a station. One partner remains at the station to perform an exercise from the list while the other partner jogs around the perimeter of the pool. Students switch roles when the jogging partner returns. Add music for motivation and enjoyment. Feel free to vary the locomotor movement used by the moving partner (backward jog, side slides, low impact jumps). Below is a sample list of exercises partners can perform at a station:

- Cross country skiers
- Neck stretches
- Kicks to the rear with arms moving in a figure 8 pattern alongside the body.
- Kicks to the front while crossing the arms behind the back.

Variations:

Add floatation devices to assist students with balance and support in the water.

Use peer-tutoring. Pair up an able-bodied student with a student who needs assistance.

Water resistant wheelchairs can be lower into the water so students can participate while in a chair.

Some exercises can be done on the pool deck on a mat if it would be easier for the student with the disability.

Assessment Ideas:

Check heart rates during the cardio portion of lesson (Are students in their target heart rate zone?)

Use peer observations to check student's exercise form

Have each student, or a group of students, comprise and lead a cardio portion of the workout session. Students can also make a music tape to accompany their exercise routines.

Student can keep a water exercise log to record the time spent in the water and their reflections regarding their workout.

Submitted by **Belinda Stillwell** who teaches at Humboldt State University in Arcata, CA. Thanks for contributing to PE Central! **Posted on PEC: 8/29/2001.**

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