

Combo Fitness -Shallow & Deep Programming

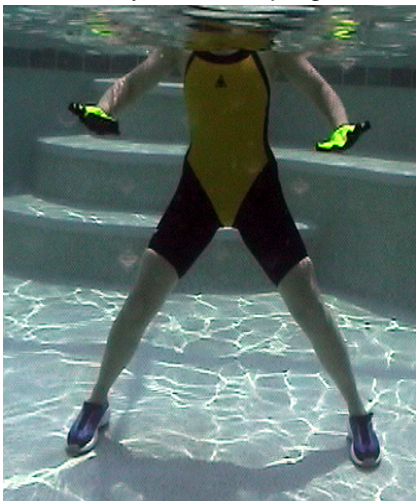
The New Year is traditionally the time when new members join fitness classes resolving that THIS TIME they will stick with the plan. As a result classes may “expand” as these new people join in with the “regular” clientele getting back into fitness. **That is the good news!** The dilemma may be keeping the regular participants “challenged” while teaching the new people the skills and drills required for success so that they do not become frustrated by having too many new moves thrown at them. Another obvious challenge is that new clientele may be out of shape and not exhibit the physical endurance necessary to keep up with the others.

So reality is that an instructor is always teaching to two groups of people: skilled and unskilled!

So let’s start thinking of how your program design may have to change to accommodate those nervous new faces AND keep the serious exercisers happy at the same time! Class design may have to “go back to the basics” because it is not advisable to jump back into a killer routine right after holidays.

The first option to consider for both levels may be to work on how to execute basic movements properly by going over good posture and technique. Some of your advanced students may require re-training with some simple NEW techniques (and stimulus) to keep them moving and not talking nor complaining.

The instructor may have to enhance the style of their class and/or change the sequence and the pattern of movements to add variety to their program design. This gives everyone the



A Jax move in shallow

opportunity to learn something new. A “new” program may bring everyone to the same playing field (i.e. they may have to listen and pay attention to new cues and a different combination of movement patterns).

This is a good time to introduce a Combo Fitness Class i.e. using shallow and deep depths for one program incorporating a program design that will provide many options for body positions (impact vs non impact) and intensity.



A Jax move in deep

Every component of fitness may be challenged in either shallow or deep water depths – however, the technique is different for both. In shallow water, it is easier to move further and faster (and train cardiovascular fitness) whereas in deep water the technique requires more muscular strength and core strength. There are some real advantages to using both water depths in the same class.

- 1: We certainly don’t want the regular patrons annoyed with the new folks. If you split up the class with the more advanced people in the deep and the new or non swimmers in shallow, the pool won’t be as crowded.
- 2: The “regulars” will have the opportunity to advance their skills in the deep and the new crowd will feel comfortable keeping their feet in touch with the pool floor working with other “newbies” with the same skill levels.

The bottom line is whether an instructor needs to facilitate a larger exercise group OR they just need to utilize new program ideas OR they want both types of training modalities – this could be the answer you have been looking for. A Combo class brings a nice change and an option for all. So let’s plan ahead – even if you have been doing this design for awhile!

The first step is that the instructor understands how to keep the program “moving” yet simple and effective. Teaching two programs simultaneously is anything but easy! Most important is to understand that many moves in shallow water have to be worked differently for deep training because of a participant’s body composition and the body’s center of balance. Realize that a buoyancy belt (or a noodle) may be used in shallow – to simulate deep water depth -if you only have a shallow depth pool. When a person is wearing a buoyancy belt in shallow water, it will allow for more body positions

including side lying, seated, and prone body positions. Vertical body positioning may not be possible unless the person is short. Changing body positions will be one of the best ways for a person to challenge their core stabilizers.

We know that in a “regular” water class good technique should optimize range of motion for all moves. However, many participants manage to cheat on using good range of motion (whether shallow or deep). The culprit here is that they lose the size of the movement as they increase the speed. This needs to be addressed – maintaining the same size of a move while increasing the speed is the only way to produce power and ultimately good cardio work. Additionally fast, bouncy moves in the water does very little for core stability training.

BASIC MOVES for Shallow H2O Depth BOTTOM CONTACT	BASIC MOVES for Deep/Transitional H2O Depths NON-BOTTOM CONTACT
WALK	MOVES LIKE A SKI
SKI	SKI
ROCK	BECOMES A PENDULLUM OR SUNTAN / SUPERMAN
JAX	OPPOSITION JAX
JUMP	POPPING
KICK	KICK
GENERALLY NEEDS BUOYANCY EQUIPMENT OR ADVANCE ABDOMINAL STRENGTH	CYCLE
JOG	JOG

The basic movements for a shallow water program (or bottom contact) for cardiovascular training, thermal-regulation, fun or filler moves are *WALK, JOG, ROCK , JAX, KICK, SKI, JUMP & JOG*.

The basic movements for a deep and/or transitional (neck depth) program(or non bottom contact) for cardiovascular training, thermal-regulation, fun or filler moves are *SKI* (which is similar to a walk however, you cannot push off the bottom nor keep one foot on the bottom as walks are biomechanically defined,) *JOG, BICYCLE, JAX, KICK, SKI*.

JUMPING doesn’t work in deep because it requires a pool floor push off) and *ROCKING* turns into a Pendulum movement such as a *Suntan & Superman* in the sagittal plane or side to side in the frontal plane. These moves become primarily abdominal training and not cardio training at all).

LOOK AT THE SKILLS REQUIRED TRAINING FOR BOTH DEPTHS:

Shallow Water Depth (bottom contact):

- how to scull, how to get heels down,
- how to breathe, how to recover from a fall,
- body check balance, how to change working positions for intensity & impact
- how to travel (assist & resist),

Deep or Transitional Depths (non bottom contact):

- Most important-** learning to scull and keep the arms down at hip height to assist/maintain posture and take stress off the shoulders (most people scull too high and that aggravates the shoulder and neck regions),
- how to breath (especially when the lungs are submerged) , how to assist & resist travel,
 - how to change from one body position to another, how to engage the core stabilizers for balance, how to travel for increased intensity using the strength of the muscles (not momentum)
 - how to facilitate keeping in good posture (this is hard to maintain especially if the person’s body fat is high),.

The other important consideration is that skills in deep water require the participant

- 1) To learn how to wear a belt (suitable to their body composition) correctly
OR select the correct noodle position to balance posture,
- 2) To learn how to push down against buoyancy rather than assist or lift up with buoyancy (as buoyancy is amplified)

End Notes:

Realize that some people should optimize the cross training benefits of both water depths especially to maximize caloric expenditure. We do recommend that only skilled and comfortable patrons go to the deep.

Check out DVD065 –Teaching a Combo Class (Shallow & Deep)

