

HOW TO CREATE VARIATIONS AND NEW IDEAS

One complaint we receive from aquatic program participants is that the program becomes boring doing the same exercises week after week.

One question we are asked by Instructors is “How can we create variety for our program to keep people coming back”?

The answer to both is to create variations for every basic move and for every muscle group. It is possible to create numerous ways to use a basic move and at least 10 ways to target the same muscle group.

HOW? Go to the WaterART Basic Instructor manual and DVD001 – The Art and Science.

In **Chapter 3 of the WaterART Instructor Manual**, we talk about **W.A.T.E.R.A.R.T** being an acronym of how to design a balanced, safe, effective and enjoyable program. **“The system to integrate exercise design and properties of water so that everyone may individualize their workout”**

First take the **W.A.T.E.R.** part of the acronym: and think about the basic moves, muscle groups and the components of fitness you will use when training your clientele and work on your exercise design. You may use each basic move individually OR you can use each in a combination of several changes to create more cardiovascular training OR you may use the basic movement with a major muscle group for muscle targeting OR you may stretch with a basic movement.

For Example

The “W” in WaterART refers to the Working Positions. *In shallow water these positions are Neutral, Extended, Suspended and Rebound.* In the advanced levels we may modify rebound and suspended for those who should not bounce or maybe cannot suspend.

In deep water, there are many body positions: side-lying, seated, L, V, prone, incline, kneeling, etc.

Get in the pool and take one move and utilize all the working and body positions. You may add a noodle. This will give you at least **4 changes or variations in shallow water** and **at least 6 variations** for deep water training.



The “A” in WaterART refers to Accelerate talks about moving at your own speed or personal best. You may choose to start slower, then work on speed as well as utilize intervals of “go fast then go slow”. You may move fast, medium, slow which would be 3 more variations. ***Try these changes with each of the above working positions and offer intervals of slow then fast, then work on technique and you already have 8 or 12 different variations of the move.***

The “T” in WaterART refers to Travel You can do all the above stationary or travelling or with partners or patterns. First try everything stationary (1 variation) then add travel sideways, forwards, backwards, clockwise in a big circle, clockwise in a little circle. You may add partners or patterns ***Travel each of the “W” and “A” combinations and you are already over 40 variations but keep going!!***

The “E” in WaterART refers to Evolve to Muscle Balancing – This is where you would work specifically on variations for muscle conditioning. The goal is to add more stretching of the tight musculature and strengthen the weak musculature so that you may have better posture, stability,

performance and decreased injuries. For effective strengthening you must work one side of the muscle pair at the time – or strengthen the weaker side. In doing so, you stretch the tighter side. You isolate the muscle work so that you do not utilize momentum. Sometimes working positions are more limited. (You would not rebound to target upper body strength as the muscle group would not be utilizing the water for resistance.) Speed would be power in one way for maximizing force and relax to reset the start positions. With stretching you need to go slow and relax to engage the stretch. You may easily travel all of your muscle work however, it is more challenging to balance and support good posture. With each major muscle group you should have a couple of exercises with and without noodles. Also you can add lower body moves to upper body strengthening or stretching sets OR upper body moves for lower body strengthening or stretching sets. Make sure though that the co-ordination required does not outweigh the exercise goal. **You should be able to create more than 10 choices for each muscle group**



The first "R" in WaterART refers to **Range of motion (ROM) OR Resistance**. When we think of range of motion and resistance for program design we will inevitably change intensity as well as provide variations. You may choose short versus longer levers. You may bend your knees or elbows for smaller ROM and intensity OR work with long levers with straight legs and arms for greater intensity and ROM. Additionally; you may point or flex your ankle or fist, slice or web your hand. (This will change ROM as well as intensity.) This applies to both cardio & muscle conditioning. In terms of resistance you may assist or resist against buoyancy or even add equipment

In Chapter 4 (also illustrated on DVD001) you will see examples for each of the basic moves to create variety. If you try all these moves through the abovementioned suggestions you will have 100's of variations and still have the Intermediate and Advanced examples to examine.

For example: Beginner Jog or Marching ideas :

- Pedal jog or Pedal March
- Jog with ankle touches in front
- Jog with ankles side
- Jog with ankles back
- Jog with touch ankle in front and back
- Mambo Jog
- Jog or March in tires jog (in, in and out, out) or (out, out, in, in)
- Rock your jog
- Jog with a 2 foot bounces in between.

Additionally Check Chapters 2 and 6 in the manual for a better understanding of the planes of movement, joint action or biomechanics, as well as the muscle location and for many exercise suggestions.

The great thing about the WATERART system and acronym is that you may take a basic move that people are already comfortable with, make a small change and your participants get a "new move" that they may perform successfully.

Now think about the "ART" part of the WaterART acronym
"A"=Analyze: Use the properties of water to enhance all the moves you choose.

"R"=Re-evaluate what you are doing. Are you making everyone do exactly the same movement OR are you providing options and opportunities for the more skilled or the less skilled?

"T"=Target: Are you reaching your target population? In other words, are you giving the class what you have advertized OR just doing the same old same old?

Don't do the same program week after week:

Because you have SO many options to choose from there is NO NEED to do the same program WEEK AFTER WEEK! Not only is this boring and not productive, the same old is not effective as your participants will adapt to the program. It is estimated that you lose 30% of the workout benefits (including decreased caloric expenditure) because you do not put much as much energy into the program if you know what is coming and have already reached the required skill level .

Create a basic outline: For each class or program an Instructor should have a basic outline of what to teach BUT be ready to insert small changes to progress and/or modify the movements and exercises from week to week. It is important to change the emphasis on which muscle groups will be targeted in each class. You will never have enough time to do ALL exercises or major muscle groups every class. Therefore, be selective and organized to provide variety with efficacy. The end result is that you will find your participants will stop talking (they have to pay attention because there is no predictable routine). Also, most will like the variety because they will gain more results in less time so will want to come back for the next class.

Do you want to be a good or GREAT Instructor?

The difference between a good Instructor and a GREAT instructor is the one who takes the time be the best they can be. You will need to read, mark yourself and learn by trying things rather than memorizing exact steps or routines. Take time to inwardly digest all the suggestions for inventory that we have provided in our manuals and most importantly - ***get in the water to try each move you are teaching and figure out how to execute the technique you are feeling.***

Always evaluate: Ask yourself what exercise or movement feels easier and how to create more intensity. Realize most people are not perfectly coordinated so they are best served doing moves that they can follow and execute easily.

Be safe and effective: Be sure to "try" your moves prior to teaching them. If you can't do every move yourself that you put into a program you cannot expect your participants to "get it".

Understand what you are training. Always state the purpose of the exercise i.e. fun, cardiovascular conditioning, posture, training, muscular strength or muscular flexibility. Too often moves are just performed faster or done with more repetitions. Some components of fitness like balance are simply not trained with speed or more repetitions.

The goal is to always know what you are doing to better help your clients gain the most out of the program. If you don't -you are setting yourself and your participants up for injury.



We love questions and are always ready to help you out! Questions show us that the instructor is interested and realizes that becoming certified is only the beginning of the teaching process. Email us at info@waterart.org

P.S. Stand out in a crowd! See instructor shirt above. Available in both women's and men's performance sizing. This 100% Endurance long sleeved shirt is created especially for Fitness Professional

Suitable for land or water use, this silky quick-dry, sweat-relief shirt combines durability and style! Sizing XS – XXL Women's & Men's S-XL