

# Welcome to Water Exercise

If you're now adding water exercise to your land exercise experience, you have discovered an environment with unique challenges and unusual equipment. Here are the most common questions asked by newcomers.

## ***WHY the Webbed Mitts?***



The Aquatic mitt is primarily a safety feature for balance and stability. In any fitness environment, safety for the participants should be the number one priority. On land, the air mass around participants is unlikely to knock anyone over, whereas in the pool, water mass surrounds the participant and exerts buoyancy and resistance. These can unexpectedly sweep the participant off their feet. The mitt helps when learning balance and stability – fundamental to an aqua fitness class.

The extra surface area of a mitt helps to maximize vertical balance in water for good postural training. Correct sculling techniques with the mitt stabilize body alignment, whether at rest or in motion.

The mitt assists travel and helps maintain efficient movement. This increases water resistance and inertia for resistance training.

The mitt can be used to resistance-train

specific muscle groups in the upper body by alternately "webbing" towards the target muscles and "slicing" to rest on the return. In lower body target training, the mitts help provide balance, stability, and good posture for more effective movements.

## ***WHY the Shoes?***

Functional Fitness is a term often heard these days. For some, the aquatic fitness class allows participants (even as they age) to stay sufficiently fit in order to enjoy day-to-day activities with low risk of injury. For others, it means training their bodies for sports-specific goals. The water environment challenges our normal notions of vertical posture and body alignment.



The aquatic shoes provide the wearer with more stability and traction for an upright stance when moving through water. They reduce the effects of impact when jumping in shallow water. They also add resistance in deep or shallow water, thereby further helping build strength.

## Why do we need to wear shoes in the water?

**#1 Safety: Your first priority in any class is safety both in and out of the pool!** Shoes help prevent accidental slips and falls on the deck and in the pool. How many of your participants are elderly? Imagine the serious consequence of falling and breaking a bone for an elderly participant! Even your younger participants can badly sprain a joint if they slip or fall.

**#2 Protection for the feet.** Water shoes help prevent infection. Walking barefoot in a pool, pool area or dressing room creates the opportunity for picking up irritating conditions like Athlete's Foot or Plantar Warts. These are often difficult to heal and can be painful.

Diabetes is a common condition found in aquatic participants since many come to exercise in the comfort and relative privacy of water. They need to take special care of their feet and should follow the general rule that shoes are worn at all times to prevent injury.

Protecting the joints. Although water is a low-impact medium for an effective workout; there is always some impact which travels through the ankles, knees, hips, and low back with every rebound step.

**#3 Help people get the best from their workout!** Water shoes can help increase traction which translates into increased speed, power and force to generate a higher intensity workout. The added surface area of the shoe will provide more downward resistance which results



in greater caloric expenditure. Most clients want to burn more calories and utilizing the muscles of the lower body (gluteus maximus, quadriceps and hamstrings) will certainly do this. The traction will also provide better posture and balance training. Let's face it – if you are training in good posture – you will achieve more results in less time.

Technology and research has increased considerably over the past 20 years and specific aquatic fitness shoes are now available for both instructors and participants. There is a wide

variety of shoes to choose from and the criterion must be: "How do you wish to use them"?

Instructors should wear aquatic shoe that has more arch support and protection against impact and slipping. These shoes must stand up to more wear and tear and be supportive to the foot and ankle. The regular participant who stays in the water throughout the program should (minimally) wear an aquatic sock in the water, however, if they want more comfort and protection – they may certainly upgrade to the instructor shoe.

## **WHY the Deep Water Belt? ...**

### ***I Can Swim!***



Swimming is a horizontal exercise in which the least resistance created helps produce speed. In contrast, aqua fitness is a vertical exercise program that creates resistance to develop strength and endurance.

In a deep-water class, a belt allows you to balance work with rest rather than use all your energy keeping your head above water. It permits you to target specific muscle groups to tone your body, train for good posture and body movement, move in all directions for an aerobic workout, and stretch through a greater range of motion, with belt-support.

In shallow water, a belt offers extra buoyancy and cushioning for someone suffering with painful hip or knee joints, foot or back problems. It offers extra confidence and protection to a non-swimmer.

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