

# Adding the Noodle to your Exercise Inventory

The noodle is an excellent piece of equipment to import into your aquatic fitness programs for many reasons. Noodles may provide support and confidence to the beginning exerciser and offer a challenging program for the seasoned exerciser.

**Noodles provide lots of interesting and creative exercise design, and noodles may be used** in all water depths by all ages and fitness levels. The real benefit of the noodle is that it can be used to target all components of fitness namely cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and endurance, agility and balance, posture, stability, flexibility and proprioception.

Most water fitness programs accommodate a variety of participants. Therefore It is important for each instructor to realize there are many ways that the noodle can be used to allow each person to become successful. The noodle is especially valuable for the beginner with balance problems or someone who may be fearful coming to the water for the first time. Then noodle can be hugged in front of the body by the beginner with both hands to assist with balance support and they may start to take their feet off the pool bottom when comfortable. When learning to walk without a walker, a participant with the help of an instructor may instead use a noodle to provide extra support and reassurance for safety.



**Walking with Aquatic Rehab Client**

For the non-swimmer or someone who is very lean (a sinker) the noodle can assist with exercises that require lifting the feet off the pool floor. In this instance the feet can easily be returned to a standing position to help build confidence.



**Beginner Fall**

Noodles can be utilized for part or as a complete aquatic fitness program. It may be utilized individually, in a group, or working with a partner. There are so many unique body and working positions to train a total body workout. The participant can sit, stand, lay, or kneel on the noodle to challenge balance. They may balance and hold the noodle overhead or drag their partner for active flexibility gains.

The length of the noodle can be used to create extra resistance for either walking or running patterns.

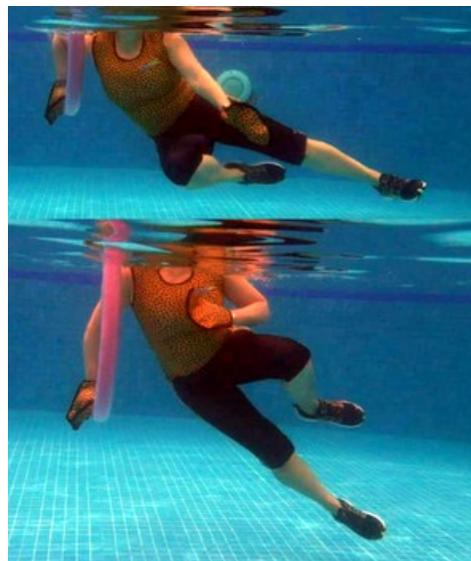
For example walk/run forward and push the noodle through the water ( like a snow plough) in front of the waist line or hold behind the back and walk backwards - to increase the resistance reverse the walking direction and feel the "tug" against the noodle.



**NOODLE -SNOW PLOUGH**

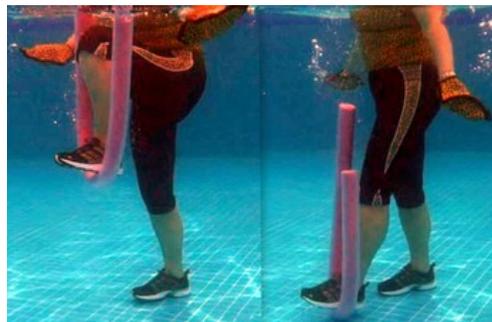
Another example is pressing the noodle down for resistance against the buoyancy of the water to target for strength. An example for this is holding the noodle with one or both hands and pressing down to extend the elbow to target the triceps.

The Instructor may choose to use the add some leg movements or added challenge body positions ( like the photo)



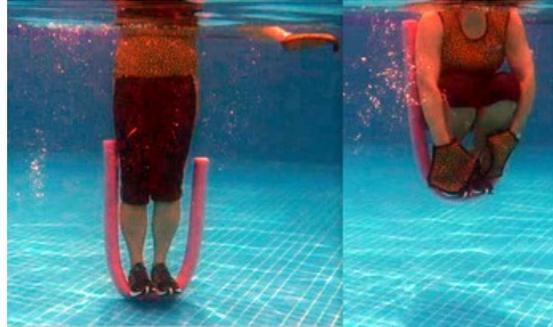
**TRICEPS DIP with JOG**

Another excellent exercise ( although advanced) is using one or two feet to press the noodle to the pool floor to target the quadriceps and gluteus maximus muscles or a noodle leg press. Remember any time the noodle is under the foot, the participant should have good water skills and comfort.



**SINGLE LEG NOODLE SQUAT**

Most athletic types will love the balance challenge especially the double squat move. Additionally, balance may be easily improved by any noodle position that requires more core work such as sitting on the noodle as a swing or standing on it with both feet to perform a noodle squat exercise.



**DOUBLE LEG BALANCE NOODLE SQUAT**

There are so many excellent ways to work on all components of fitness for added muscular strengthening gains and benefits.

Always be ready to offer extra challenge to the people who are confident and comfortable with the noodle and alternatives for anyone who is less skilled or has poor balance. The goal is to make everyone fitter yet successful. Assume that people new to a program will require more time to learn and master an exercise. Start with easier exercises and then progress. This will give everyone a realistic level of intensity and complexity to master. Show all levels so that clients feel successful and benefit with the workout. Often balance is very much challenged with noodle positions such as standing, kneeling and sitting on the swing. Therefore, an instructor should get in the water prior to showing noodle exercises and test their inventory so that they know how to provide both modifications or overloads and challenges.

**It must be pointed out that all noodles are not equal for use.**

Some are more buoyant, more resistive, more durable, different shapes and different lengths. Just as land gyms offer a variety of equipment to allow their participants to progress training, pools need to offer a variety of progressive resistance for their multi-level fitness programs.

The light weight "open cell" noodle with the hole through the middle, is often a good, safe starting point for a "real" beginner but they do not have sufficient strength to last long or to provide much support or resistance.

The "closed cell" noodles are manufactured in such a way they do not absorb water so they last many years longer - which is well worth the added price. These come in lighter and heavier strengths so provide good levels for exercises that can be progressed for control, resistance and strength challenges

The noodle can be used in a wide variety of positions where the arms and legs may be used as a unit or individually. (See body and noodle positions listed below.) This choice changes the position of the buoyancy assistance or resistance to provide many different challenges for each exercise. For best results: always balance upper body movements with lower body moves that complement each other. Train to balance work with rest and keep moving to stay warm and happy.

The bottom line: "choose options with care, know who your participants are, train them to work at their own level and progress at their own pace".

**THE NOODLE OFFERS A VARIETY OF BODY & NOODLE POSITIONS**

- Holding lightly as a Ballet Barre for balance assistance
- Noodle around the front
- Noodle around the back (chaise lounge)
- Prone (on stomach)
- Incline to front or tilt to the side
- Chair/Seated
- Swing
- Bicycle
- Kneeling
- For fun try Partner noodles

- For the advanced or adventurous -try Double noodles

## SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- ✓ Screen participants for muscular-skeletal problems, especially backs and shoulders, and wrists
- ✓ Know who the non-swimmers are and if they are comfortable with their feet off the pool bottom. Go over skill to train how to get the feet back to the pool floor.
- ✓ Non-swimmers may add a buoyancy belt for additional safety (but realize this will add more buoyancy to their body ) so often utilizing both a buoyancy belt and noodle will be too hard to control. Always go over safe recovery to vertical if this option is offered.
- ✓ Conversely, people with more lean muscle mass who are often sinkers in the water may require a buoyancy belt for some of the more difficult noodle body positions for safe programming. The goal is to keep the head easily above water and complete the workout safely.
- ✓ Never hold or grip the noodle too tightly as this may cut off the circulation to the palm which can increase blood pressure. This may be high risk for people who already have high blood pressure.
- ✓ If client has difficulties holding the noodle then the noodle may be cut down for a smaller circumference.
- ✓ Often men or athletic types may feel uncomfortable or silly (especially using the riding a bike position). If they are uncomfortable, offer another noodle position
- ✓ Everyone has a variety of needs and expectations with aquatic fitness classes be ready to cater to these needs.
- ✓ Some people with high cut bathing suits experience chaffing that may occur with new noodles when sitting or straddling the noodle. Wearing bike shorts can help with this problem.
- ✓ Special care must be taken with the noodle in deep water. The noodle should not be held out in front of the body ( with the shoulders flexed to chest height to support the body) as this creates a contraindicated stress on the shoulders.
- ✓ Always remind participants that the noodle is not a legal flotation device.



## Types of Noodles

- Regular Noodles - Open Cell noodles (no hole in middle) 58 inch long x 2.5 diameter [click here for more details](#)
- Senior Aquafit Intermediate Closed Cell Noodle - 58 inch long x 2.5 diameter -[click here for more details](#)
- Close Cell Round Striped Noodles - 60 inch long x 2.6 inch diameter -[click here for more details](#)
- Pilates Closed Cell Noodle -48 inches x 2.6 inches diameter - [click here for more details](#)
- Aqua Noodle Rider Sea Creatures Noodles (Ocara, Shark, Gator, Sea Horse) [click here for more details](#)
- Box of 24 Senior Intermediate Noodles [click here for more details](#)
- Box of 12 Closed Cell Striped Noodles [click here for more details](#)

**How Did the Noodle Begin** [article click here](#)

