

WaterART Working Positions for Multi-level Programming in Shallow H2O Depth

Use the correct mix of working positions to help everyone achieve their desired level of impact and intensity.

The goal of every Instructor teaching a water exercise program should be to provide the most effective workout for all members of the class, but with the variety of participants with different fitness levels, water skills and health histories that comprise the class it soon becomes obvious that no two people are going to work out at the same level of intensity.

The WaterART System of incorporating a variety of working positions into every water workout is the key to **varying impact & intensity**. A correct working position will optimize the workout by using the protection and properties of water. The challenge for most instructors is to get this information across to each participant to allow everyone to choose their preferred levels of intensity. Taking the time to train people to use the most effective working position for every exercise is the answer to safe and successful class design. The easiest way to train is by going through the specific working position to show how each technique allows for increased or decreased effort. If you also use hand signals (visual cues) to represent each position and/or add verbal cues as you train you can use these options throughout the program to remind participants that they can choose their own level.



WaterART Working Positions for Shallow H2O Exercise Design

EXTENDED Working Position:

This is the easiest level with extremely low impact and low intensity. Start standing tall with feet on the bottom of the pool. The water level is ideally somewhere between the waist and arm pit. Many of the moves such as walking will mimic land movement since there is no appreciable change of height with each move. There is absolutely NO bouncing or jarring on the joints. The goal is to work in perfect posture.

This working position is suited to the beginning or less fit individual including participants returning from injury. This is the best working position to start training for posture and balance as keeping the feet on the pool floor will increase stability and train thus train posture and balance.



Visual Cue:

Touch the top of your head and bring the hand slicing down in front of the face (in a straight line) with the thumb towards the face and baby finger perpendicular parallel to the body to remind people about proper body alignment for good posture and standing tall.

Verbal Cue:

Imagine you are balancing a cup of tea (your choice) on your head. No bounce. Stand Tall.

NEUTRAL Working Position:

This working position will provide easy to moderate cardiovascular intensity and moderate to hard intensity muscular conditioning work. The water level is the same as extended but the shoulders are submerged and the feet remain in contact with the pool bottom at all times. Anchor the body using the abdominals. Submerging under the water allows protection of the joints particularly shoulders and neck. All moves are low impact as the feet slide out with each movement maintaining contact with the pool bottom. There is no momentum, therefore muscles are used to initiate all movements as well as further engage the abdominal core to anchor under the water. For stationary upper body strength exercise use a staggered or athletic stance (one foot in front of the other in a lunge position). This helps to get the shoulders under the water. Be sure to change lead legs to protect the knees from stress. In shallow water, especially for a non swimmer with neck and shoulder issues - this is truly the best working position prior to going into deep water depth or feet off the pool bottom.

**Visual Cue:**

Lightly tap or touch the shoulders (left hand to left shoulder and right hand to right top of shoulder) to reference getting under the water. Also may use the hand to slice a line across the neck where the water level should be.

Verbal Cue:

Wear your water necklace. Submerge and protect your shoulders.

REBOUND Working Position:

Especially for advanced participants or athletes, who like to bounce, jump or explode out of the water. This working position can provide moderate to high intensity but also has the most impact level. Research has indicated that working in waist depth can offer the greatest cardiovascular intensity because of the high use of the muscles in the lower body but this also provides highest impact level so use caution for people with knee, hip and back issues. Some individuals are not good shock absorbers and consequently cheat or bob (minimal leg movement in the water). Ideally, the legs (quadriceps, gluteus maximus and hamstring muscles) are used to push forcefully off the pool floor to explode or propel up out of the water. Therefore, training the athlete for correct take off and landing movements is key to minimize joint stress. The aim is to power up out of the water and anchor



down to push off again. The hips and knees must be flexed to get up out of the water yet also absorb impact or vertical stress on the down phase of this exploding movement. In doing so, this will prevent bobbing or using momentum with the jumps. Be sure to allow individuals to take the time and speed they need to explode in and out of the water. Dependent upon lower body level and strength of the legs –everyone should move at their best personal speed which will provide advanced cardiovascular work and lower body conditioning. There is minimal core work required or trained with this working position.

Please note: Rebounding is NOT suitable for clients with any muscular skeletal problems including: back, hip, knee, ankle or severe osteoporosis or arthritis. This is exactly why WaterART offers the other working positions to be more inclusive and safer for every body type and fitness level.

Visual Cue: Clap the hands in front of the body and lift the top one up to imitate using height or a big bounce for the moves. Clap only once and use body expression to emphasize the jump.

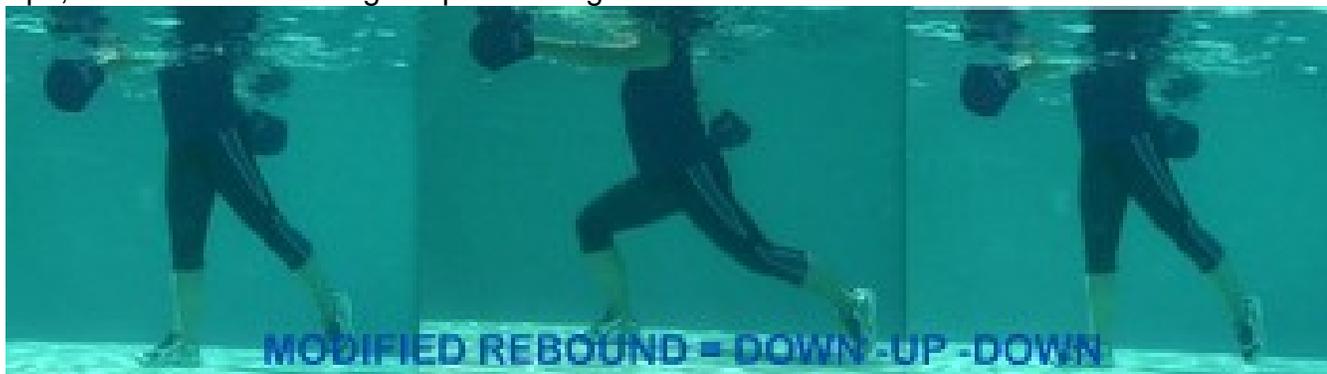
Verbal Cue:

Avoid working on your toes or leaning forward. Make sure that the heels come down on the pool floor. Bend your knees to jump up. Use your legs properly to propel up out of the water. Push down to go up. Think of a squat and push up and then sink down into the squat. Breathe or exhale on effort.

MODIFIED REBOUND Working Position (Height without Flight):

This is a mixture of starting the move tall in an Extended working position and moving into a Neutral working position so that a **down-up movement replaces the up-down of a regular rebound working position**. The movement requires no vertical jumping (or lift off the pool bottom) but keeps one foot in contact with the pool floor at all times to prevent the body lifting with buoyancy. This requires more core strength to anchor the move down into the water especially during the power phase of the move in Neutral. The lower body relaxes back into the Extended working position on the return phase of the movement. The walking/jog/marching action is down-up, down-up to flex the hips, knees and ankles to essentially squat in between any basic movements.

This working position is especially helpful when strengthening the upper body muscles because the shoulders are under water to work (in the Neutral working position). Here the leg position may be alternated to bend the alternate knee on the next power move. This working position is suitable for just about every participant and program since intensity may be regulated or increased easily for lower body strengthening. This is the best position for people who need more lower body strengthening and cannot add vertical stress on the lower extremities with jumping movements. The squat like move will provide high intensity cardiovascular training with about ¼ impact of the Rebound working position. This is by far the most functional movement to help people move from sitting to standing on land. Often, on land, squats are an extremely difficult move for the aging population; however, in water the squat may be pain free AND functional. Be sure to wear shoes and track the hips, knees and toes in a good parallel alignment.



Visual Cue:

Touch fingers to shoulders (to go down) and then point thumbs up (to go up).

Verbal Cue:

Sit – stand – sit stand – if you can say this –then you can do this. Squat and lift.

SUSPENDED Working Position: This IS a shallow water working position using both feet off the pool floor but anyone can touch down when necessary. Work the legs with feet approximately 5 cm/3 inches off the pool floor without bending forward at the waist or moving to deeper water depths. Arms generally need to be used to scull and assist the suspended action. This position requires superior abdominal strength to keep the head above water to maintain the range of motion (ROM). Always avoid eggbeaters or rotary kicks with the legs due to the unnecessary torque on the knees. If someone is overworking the arms or struggling, (to hold their head above the water), they should utilize a buoyancy aid (see modified suspended).



This working position is for advanced abdominal strength and core work, balance training, and non-impact cardiovascular training. Intensity will depend on each person's body composition. Less buoyant or less skilled people will work harder than naturally skilled or more buoyant (more body fat) bodies.

Visual Cue:

Put your hands in prayer position in front of your chest and then show the sculling and breathing required. Sit on the chair and lift the feet if you are on deck to simulate the move (as we can't levitate and show feet off the pool floor when standing).

Verbal Cue:

Breathe (as lungs are submerged). Maintain ROM. If a person has reverted to smaller range of motion or faster movements to keep the head above water, then we suggest to go back to the neutral working position or use a modified suspended working position.

MODIFIED SUSPENDED Working Position: In shallow water depth use buoyancy equipment such as a belt or noodle to assist the movement because of lack of core strength. The equipment will allow the feet to leave the pool floor but also allow the feet to touch down when required. For example: bicycling with no impact done in a recumbent position will keep the feet free but allows for both feet to be placed down to take a break or change noodle or body position. The client needs to be sufficiently skilled to maintain posture. Modified Suspended work utilizes the core constantly to hold the body position and the feet off the pool bottom but is not as difficult to maintain as with regular suspended, especially for a non-swimmer. WaterART recommends using a noodle either in front of the body (keeping the elbows on the noodle and pushing down into the water) or a comfortable and well fitted buoyancy belt. Realize that different body compositions (more body fat) may require less assistance.

Conversely, less skills and weaker core strength may require more buoyancy assistance. Often programs need a variety of noodles and buoyancy belts to better accommodate all body types.

This working position is suggested for anyone who needs to work on core strength, posture and balance and requires a non-impact work out; may have less skills and wants to extend the duration of a completely non-impact program in shallow water depth.



Visual Cue:

Use a noodle or chair to demonstrate the required body position.

Verbal Cue:

Use your hands to scull, breathe, & think posture - posture –posture! Realize the pool bottom is there should you need to stand up.