

The Stretch and Relaxation Phase

After completing the workout phase of an Aquajogging session, it is important to stretch and relax. The focus is on stretching the muscles to improve or maintain flexibility and relaxing the mind to release stress. The stretch and relaxation phase of the session provides time to recover from the workout while maintaining or improving flexibility. The heart rate and respiratory rate will decrease toward pre-exercise levels.

ACSM guidelines for flexibility state the following:

Stretch all major muscle groups 2 - 3 times per week.

This phase of the session is generally 3 to 5 minutes in length. The temperature of water and ambient air temperature will have a dramatic effect on the length and design of the stretch period. Remember that thermal conductivity of the water draws heat rapidly away from the body. If the water is very cold, then stretching will not be effective. It is then advisable to stretch in a warm environment.

CALA recommends the following:

1. Static stretches may be held 8 - 30 seconds. If the water is cool, hold static stretches for the minimum amount of time, since they are only effective when the muscle is warm.
2. Leaders may advise participants to continue stretching in a warmer environment such as the shower or whirlpool.
3. Educate participants about the importance of optimal flexibility. Teach participants how to effectively stretch the muscles.
4. In cool water, while stretching one part of the body, another part can be performing movements to keep the body warm. For example, perform a narrow jogmarch with a triceps stretch.
5. Another technique to deal with cool temperatures is to intersperse activity with static stretches. For example, x ski for 8-16 counts; stop in stride position (one leg forward and one leg back); bend front leg; keep back leg straight; gently push back heel to pool bottom; visualize the gastrocnemius and soleus muscles lengthening; hold for a minimum of 8 counts); x ski for 8-16 counts; repeat gastrocnemius (calf) stretch on other leg. (This is effective with bottom contact - chest deep water)
6. As circulation is assisted by the aquatic environment, blood pooling in the extremities is not a problem, when standing still, after vigorous movement.
7. If the pool is warm and participants are feeling comfortable, stretch and relaxation exercises may be enjoyed for an extended period of time, up to 60 seconds would be delightful.
8. Remember that effective stretching will only happen when the body is warm and relaxed and the joints are well lubricated from movement. This is why stretching is placed after the workout

portion of the class and why thermal comfort must be considered.

9. Since buoyancy has decreased joint loading and reduced the amount of impact the body experiences, the stretching phase of an aquajogging session can be shorter than after a jogging session on land.

10. Many land stretches rely on the force of gravity or the ability to anchor the body and generate the forces required to lengthen the desired muscle groups.

11. In an aquajogging session, it is often difficult to apply adequate tension to lengthen the muscles being stretched. Use the pool wall or move shallower to allow gravity to assist stretching.

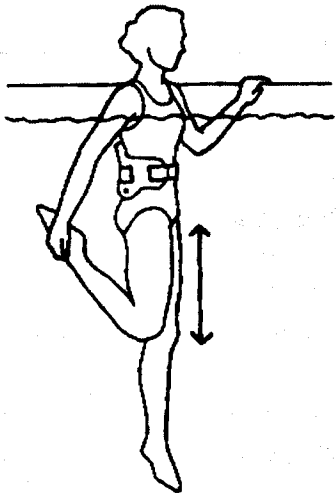
Stretching advice for class:

1. Focus on deep rhythmical breathing and allow the muscles to lengthen to the full range of motion and gently beyond. This is how flexibility gains are made.
2. Know the lines of pull of the muscles in order to design effective and safe stretches.
3. Always stretch to the point of tension, not pain. Give permission for participants to modify the stretches to suit their needs. Assist by providing appropriate options.
4. Emphasize correct alignment to ensure joint safety and appropriate lengthening of the target muscle group.
5. Hold deep stretches for at least 8 seconds, temperature permitting. Participants will feel the tension of a stretch ease after 6 - 10 seconds. This is the amount of time required for the muscle stretch reflex to accommodate to the new length.
6. In warm water, after 8 seconds, the stretched muscle can safely be lengthened further. This is 'progressive' or 'developmental' stretching. It is a very effective and safe way to increase flexibility.
7. It is not necessary to "cling" to the beat of the music during this phase of the aquajogging session. Good music choices include classical, new age, ballads, and nature sounds.
8. It may be appropriate to turn off the music and have participants close their eyes and listen to the water and their own breathing while they relax.
9. Using a partner to assist your stretch may be appropriate for some groups. Correct technique and good listening skills are essential to prevent injury from over stretching.

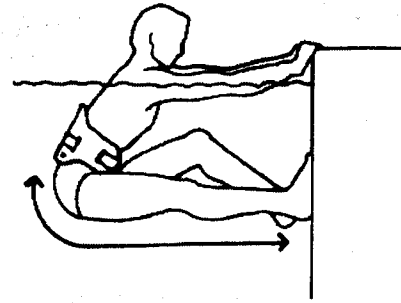
While it is necessary to have a bank of movements upon which to draw when designing a specialty aquajogging class, it is just as important to cue the movements effectively and safely. Chapter 8 focuses on detailed technique tips including verbal and visual cues which will enhance leadership in and success with the aquajogging experience.

STRETCHES

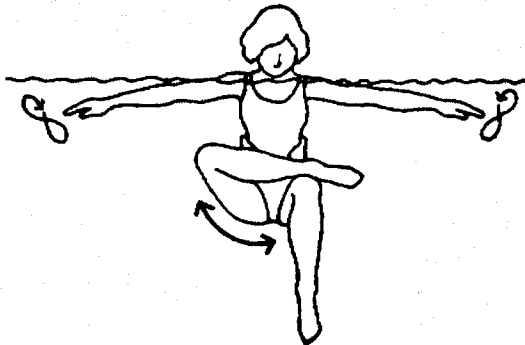
Quad - Hip Flexor



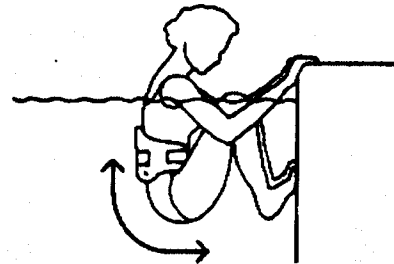
Hamstrings



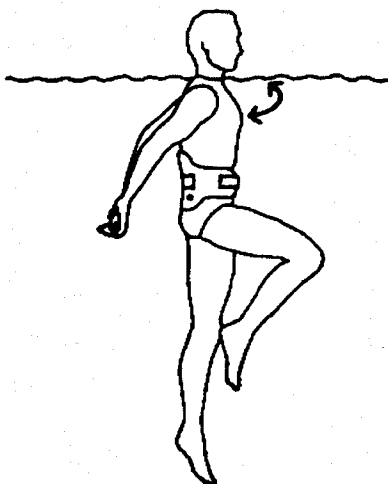
**Gluteus Medius/Minimus
Tensor Fascia Latae**



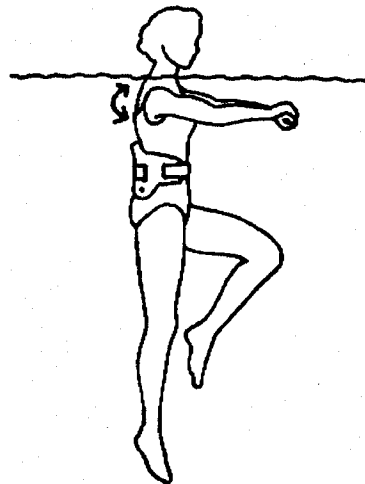
Gluteus Maximus (Low Back)



Anterior Deltoids - Pectorals



**Posterior Deltoids
Trapezius - Rhomboids**



Gastrocnemius

