

***Passionate People Know is... Music moves the mind, body and spirit...
Charlene Kopansky, CALA Founder and President***



Adrienne shares her thoughts, via email - March 7, 2011

"I have had a long-standing discussion/dispute with Aquafit instructors over the use of music for rhythmic exercise. I am a retired music and phys-ed teacher who has learned the value of a rhythmic beat in making the neuro-muscular connection during exercise. I have been participating in Aquafit classes since the 1980's in various locations as I moved around Ontario. I don't care whether they play Heavy Metal or Beethoven, loud or soft, as long as they establish a good beat and do exercises in time to the music. The beat sets up a pattern which makes muscles "willing to cooperate" for a smooth movement.

Having a boom-box blaring out one tempo, while an instructor on the deck does an exercise at a different speed appropriate for movement in gravity (usually faster), and at the same time, the Aquafit participants frantically try to copy, but at a rhythm dictated by water resistance (usually slower). The messages sparking from brain to muscle get totally scrambled, leaving me with that one-foot-on-the-brake-one-foot-on-the-accelerator feeling! In effect, the music is not only not useful, but instead, counter-productive.

When I try to explain this, I am told cheerfully, "Just block out the music if it's bothering you." Sorry, but I am incapable of doing that. Besides, if they are not observing the auditory beat themselves, why do they bother with the noise???

I would be very pleased if this message could be a part of the basic training of all Aquafit instructors. One of music's greatest attributes over its long history has been its contribution to smooth kinetic movement. Think of sailors hauling on lines, milling tweed, and many other cooperative work activities which are made easier and more enjoyable when done in time to music. It is not necessary for people to understand the physiology of the audio-neuro-muscular connection for them to be able to react with it! It's not space-physics! It's a natural reaction. Why not get it working for us?



- Adrienne Pollak

Charlene Responds: March 16, 2011

Thank you for taking the time to express your thoughts about music and rhythm.

I couldn't agree with you more. Thank you, thank you, thank you. May I have permission to post your comments on my website. You are eloquent,, scientific and artistic in the way you have expressed your thoughts.

As the Founder and President of CALA Inc., I have created an educational program based on the effective use of music. I believe that music creates the mathematical structure for exercise design and delivery. CALA instruction includes a focus on music as the motivator for movement. At every possibly opportunity, music is used to stimulate the mind to discover, the body to move and the spirit to soar. The use of music is inextricably woven throughout CALA courses, clinics, workshops and conferences.

When teaching general aquafitness classes, CALA leaders are encouraged to use music with beats per minute between 118 and 128 (bpm). The depth of water, the purpose of the class, and the movement design will affect speed of motion and how the music is used. Through CALA, instructors learn to design movements using quarter tempo, half tempo, on tempo and double tempo leg-foot, arm-hand and/or torso moves. Double tempo is used sparingly, for variety and as a means of achieving anaerobic training, definitely not the only means (faster is not

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always better). The body surface area as dictated by the length of the lever, as well as the hand and foot positions will affect the speed of motion (tempo of the movement) demonstrated by the instructor.

The selected buoyancy also greatly affects the speed of motion (tempo) that is appropriate for each move. CALA teaches instructors to manipulate surface area by offering options of three hand positions (slice, fist and flat); two-foot positions (gentle dorsi-flex and gentle plantar-flex) and short or long lever lengths. CALA teaches instructors to select three buoyancy options for contact (touching the pool bottom) and suspended (not touching the pool bottom) aquafitness. These options include light bounce, anchored and propulsion.

Ultimately, the participant will choose the surface area, buoyancy manipulation and speed of motion suitable for their own body and consistent with their personal goals and objectives with respect to fitness, health and well-being.

Another key aspect of CALA training is the emphasis on Range of Motion. For the most part, CALA encourages participants to move through a full range of motion, within their comfort zone. Range of motion affects surface area, buoyancy options and speed of motion. Conversely, the speed of motion (tempo of movement) is greatly affected by surface area and the buoyancy option and will affect range of motion.



Moving to music, in an aquatic environment is motivating and inspirational. Music lifts the spirit and gets the body going, while activating the mind to move on the beat, on half of the beat, on quarter of the beat or on double the beat. Music also soothes the soul and facilitates the release of stress. The music tempo and mood used during the warm up and workout phases of the class has a different energy and tempo than the music used during the stretch and relaxation phase of a regular aqua fitness class.

As an example, an anchored movement, in chest to shoulder depth water (contact) with long levers, and flat hand, using music that is 128 bpm is most effectively performed at quarter tempo. This means it takes 8 counts of the music to perform the full movement. Some participants will need to decrease their surface area, even on quarter tempo in order to use their full range of motion.

CALA leaders are taught to experiment and try all the moves they plan to use in a class, with the music they have selected. This will allow them to see if the moves and the music work together considering the speed of motion, the buoyancy option and the surface area manipulation. This is an essential part of the CALA training and an expectation of our leaders.

CALA also guides instructors to use only professionally made music, constructed in 32 count phrases. This music is generally 4/4 music and facilitates ease when designing choreographed patterns and leading a class. Participants connected to music, 'hear' the phrase and instinctively know when a movement change is likely to happen. Although, not all leaders are able to 'hear the phrase', this is one aspect of leadership that separates the good instructors from those who are at an elite level.

When music is seamlessly integrated into the vertical water training experience, the affects are magical - as is water.... by the way!

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I understand your frustration. To make matters challenging for me, as the founder and creator of the Kopansky Methodology of Vertical Water Training, another training organization teaches their leaders to use any music they want to use and to play the music in the background. As a former dancer, and lifetime lover of music, I find this practice utterly disappointing. Another challenge is also present. Music companies produce so called aqua fitness music that is far above the recommended 128 bpm. It is an uphill battle for me as the owner of CALA Inc. to try to get people to understand the intimate relationship between music, movement and water.

You are absolutely correct with everything you have written and once again, thank you. Let's work together to change the way other organizations are training their leaders.

I think writing a letter to the supervisor and the manager of a facility is appropriate too.

If it is a CALA certified leader who is teaching without honouring water tempo and using the music properly, I would appreciate it if you suggest they participate in more CALA training through workshops and conferences specifically geared to effective use of music and choreography patterns. If the individual in question is open to it and you are willing, perhaps you can help them to use the music properly. With your intimate knowledge of music and its power you could become an asset in the growth and development of leaders.



Strangely enough not everyone feels and hears the rhythm of music. I 'feel' for those people. I am absolutely unable to sit still when music is playing... my body wants to move, even if it is a shoulder lifting up and down, a toe tapping, or my body swaying... I love the feeling and the energy around movement and music together. We are the lucky ones... let the music lift your soul and move your body.

Adrienne's response:

Thank you for your kind words, and for supporting me in my frustrations! So sad that we train kids to sit down shut up and block out music. You have my permission to share my SCREAMS! about misuse of music in Aquafit classes. I have spoken diplomatically to a long line of instructors who come from (*name of company omitted*), which is the company contracted to do fitness classes in my condo building. I have written letters to the Board and to our (*location omitted*) manager. I have expressed my frustration to my Aquafit classmates. NONE of them can understand what I am ON about! I get the feeling that they just want me to shut up about my silly preoccupation. [I am the kind of person who has to turn off the car radio if the windshield wipers are not operating in synch with the music!]

Indeed, we are the lucky ones, to have experienced music, dance and movement enough to make it part of our lives. I am in my 78th year and attribute my vitality and mobility to being able to incorporate music in all its aspects into my life

- Adrienne Pollak