

Workout Tips: A Muscle Conditioning Focus

Select exercises for muscle groups that have not been overemphasized during the cardio phase of the class.

Promote body balance by focusing on all muscles that surround the particular joint that is being moved.

Utilize verbal and visual cues to educate the participants about the names and functional significance of the muscles that are being worked. This increases knowledge of purpose and motivation.

Encourage participants to maintain a strong mental focus and concentrate on the feeling of the muscle actions that are being performed as well as the fatigue that may be experienced.

Keep the lower body moving while focusing on conditioning the upper body and vice versa. This will assist the participants to stay warm during the 'muscle conditioning' phase of the class. It will also help to maintain training heart rate if the muscle work is integrated "interval style" into the cardio phase of class.

Half tempo, quarter temp and anchored movements can be used to increase muscle focus and intensity of activation. Strive to work the muscle group through the fullest possible range of motion.

Participants often breath-hold while concentrating on intense muscle activation. Encourage regular, deep breathing.

On land, participants are often taught to 'exhale with the effort' when doing muscle work. In water exercise, the effort occurs during both phases of the movement (For example: abduction and adduction of the legs in a repeater pendulum leg swing). Regular, deep breathing is encouraged while exercising in an aquafitness class. If a stronger effort is required during one phase of the movement, cue to 'exhale with the effort' on the more energetic phase of the movement. For example: breathe out during the 'crunch' phase of standing abdominal crunches.