



# Ask the Seahorse

## Equipment: Dumbbells vs Paddles

Hi Charlene,



### Question

I instruct aqua classes. We have been asked for our opinions about paddles vs dumbbells. Most instructors are saying dumbbells. I prefer the paddles because I feel you have more options (slice or flat) and I feel they are easier on the joints and make it easier to keep correct form because you are not working with the buoyancy of the dumbbells. Dumbbells are good too but I have noticed that more people tend to lose correct posture with dumbbells because they are more difficult to move through the water.



I'm wondering what your opinion is?

Thanks, *Claudia*



### Charlene's response

You nailed it. Another disadvantage of dumbbells is that they float. The force of buoyancy assists the upward movement of the dumbbell towards the surface of the water. This often compromises the wrist, elbow, shoulders and neck as participants try to control the upthrust of buoyancy. It is often difficult to keep the wrist in a neutral position and to keep the dumbbell from popping up. The buoyancy of the dumbbells negates the double positive muscle activation that is a beneficial feature of aquatic training. Also, many participants will not be able to maintain full range of motion or correct posture when holding on to dumbbells

*Charlene*

For additional information, please refer to the following article "PARTICIPANT/INSTRUCTOR HANDOUT DON'T BE A DUMBBELL!" By Judy Laughton (Leaders please copy for your participants [www.calainc.org/Handouts/Participant\\_handouts/Sept\\_05\\_Dumbbell.pdf](http://www.calainc.org/Handouts/Participant_handouts/Sept_05_Dumbbell.pdf))