

CALA CENTRE OF POWER - AQUA KICK BOX

Part I - The Philosophy and the Stance

by Charlene Kopansky, BSc. H.K. founder and president of CALA

This is the beginning of an ongoing series of articles that will share information about Aqua Kick Boxing from a Centre of Power focus. Enjoy!

Preamble: Some thoughts that directed the development of this specialty:

With the surge of interest in land based Kick Boxing in Canada, led by Libby Norris and the T'ai Bo craze promoted by Billy Banks, it was suggested that CALA develop an Aqua Kick Box program.

While I embrace all forms of movement, I was uncomfortable with the notion of developing a course based on kicking and boxing. For me, it seemed aggressive with an intention to visualize causing pain to the phantom recipient. Also, my experience in this area of movement was close to non-existent.

The CALA philosophy provides a wonderful opportunity to free the body, focus the mind and allow the spirit to fly during an Aqua Kick Box session.

After some play time in the water, body storming the CALA version of a jab, hook, upper cut and some kicks, my "take" on Aqua Kick Box began to emerge.

I referred to other resources and decided to forgo the 'attack and defend' perspective. When moving in water, it occurred to me that this kicking and boxing could be a marvelous way to deliver and receive positive energy. Hence, **Centre of Power - Aqua Kick Box** was born.

The movement of water, the way it looks when moving, the way it feels on the body when moving through it and the way it sounds when moving all come together to create that magic of movement in water.

The boxing and kicking movements are modified to suit this philosophy of sharing positive energy. They are not true to the land based "real thing". The CALA philosophy provides a wonderful opportunity to free the body, focus the mind and allow the spirit to fly during an Aqua Kick Box session.

When doing Aqua Kick Box moves, the experience becomes richer as the "doer" gets "centered". Centering oneself is all about being

totally "in the class". Totally refers to engaging the body, mind and spirit (soul) in the 'Centre of Power - Aqua Kick Box' session. The body is involved because it is the tool, it moves. Sprinkle educational tips about alignment, technique, anatomy, physiology and affirmations into the session so that the body moves purposely with a mental focus, feeling good. This leads to enhanced self esteem, more self confidence, a greater commitment to involvement in the session and a sense of accomplishment. Then there are all the other benefits such as improved physical fitness.

In order to provide an environment whereby the participant(s) is "centred", it is essential that the leader/coach/trainer is in the same "centered" state of mind, body and soul while conducting the session.

Let's get down to brass tacks. Posture and alignment are crucial elements that contribute to safe exercise experiences. As in any other activity, Aqua Kick Box requires a strong foundation from which to move with purpose and skill. The "Stance" is a place to begin and end when teaching all of the movements in this specialty course. Following are the fundamentals for correct stance.

For the purpose of this series of articles, all actions will be conducted in shoulder depth water.

Stance:

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Stance is how one stands for maximum power or centering. Front Stance means feet are parallel and shoulder distance apart. Feel free to modify the distance of the feet for comfort. If the base is wider than shoulder distance, the foundation may feel more secure.

Teach the ready or starting position and identify it as the foundation for all moves. Give time for participants to practice and perfect this position. Following are a list of guidelines for perfect stance. Use them as a teaching tool and reminders when conducting or participating in Aqua Kick Box sessions.

"Always start from and return to a powerful, centered stance."

Positioning for maximum power & mental focus (centering): Front Stance

- place feet shoulder width apart, hips in neutral or level, "headlights showing you the way".

The headlight analogy works really well to reinforce the concept of a level pelvis. Place fists on hip bones at the front of the body. Keep fists in place. Imagine they are headlights on a car. If the pelvis is tilted forward, the "headlights" will point down to the road, this is not an effective way to see your way on a dark country road - the pelvis is not level. If the "headlights" point upwards, again, ineffective lighting for the driver - the pelvis will be tucked under rather than level. Now point the "headlights" straight ahead, notice how the pelvis is level. Place one hand on

the lower back, you will feel a gentle curve. This is the lumbar curve, it is supposed to be there. It is part of the spring-like structure of the vertebral column that contributes to shock absorption when we are moving. Allow the lumbar curve to remain, keep "headlights" pointing straight ahead, activate abdominals, lengthen spine and open chest. There you have it! Now keep it!



- hold hands in light fists, side by side, palms facing body, forearms parallel
- hold hands at upper chest, knuckles just below water
- relax shoulders
- lengthen neck
- retract chin, lift ponytail

The ponytail analogy creates a great visual

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image. Imagine you have a ponytail at the back, top area of your head. Gently pull up and slightly back on the ponytail and feel the neck and spine lengthen and the chin gently retract. I have used this analogy, even with a bald participant in class. He thought it was hilarious and subsequently the group had a LOL experience (you know, "Laugh out Loud"). You will have to use your own discretion with this analogy. Some leaders prefer to visualize a helium filled balloon in the same location as the ponytail.

Certification is optional & includes theory & practical components. There is no recertification process.

Course content:

- benefits of boxing & kicking in water
- drills to reinforce technique & enhance skill level for the stance, jab, upper cut, hook, front kick, side kick & back kick, speed ball, shuffle & skip
- motivating movement patterns - "boxeography"- basic & advanced



Charlene leads an enthusiastic group in the Aqua Box Workshop at SFU in October '99.

- keep knees soft and unlocked
- maintain shoulders, hips and knees in one line
- visualize all movements of the hands, arms and legs starting and ending at the body core (solar plexus - source of energy)

- techniques to cue alignment, vary the prime movers & create balanced muscle work & cardio overload with a strong mental focus to build positive energy & personal power

Practice this stance to make it become a habit.

"Visualize huge surges of positive energy entering the body with each retraction of the arm or leg."

Kudos: Many thanks to Sarah Neill, Lions Pool, Whitehorse, B.C. for the wonderful and skilled photography which will be present in each and every issue. Also a special thank you to Krista Prevost, the model who demonstrated the moves along the shores of the Yukon River, summer 2000.

CALA Centre of Power Aqua Kick Box Specialty Course Description:

This specialty course involves powerful boxing & kicking movements in water. Leaders, fitness participants & the general public are welcome. Each course participant will take away the skills required to do Aqua Kick Box moves effectively. Upon course completion a graduate letter indicating the training involved is provided.

Credits for course:

7 CALA Credits plus credits with the following organizations: AFLCA, BCRPA, SPRA, CFP, NSFLLAA, MFC and CanFit Pro

* Credits can be banked with CALA even if you have not participated in a CALA course

LAUNCHED.....JUNE 18, Whitehorse Lions Pool, Whitehorse, Yukon, during the summer solstice

FOLLOWED BYJULY 9, Echo Pool, Port Alberni, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, amidst tall cedars and soaring mountains

OCTOBER 28, St. Laurent Pool, Ottawa, Ontario, with fall colors blazing

NOVEMBER 17, Nav Canada, Cornwall, Ontario, with snowflakes gently falling

CALL CALABook a specialty course at your facility1-888-751-9823, cala@interlog.com