

SAWFA Convention

The South African Water Fitness Association is happy to announce the 2025 'Refit' Convention with main presenter Charlene Kopansky from the Canadian Aquafitness Leaders Alliance Inc.



The convention is taking place on 22 and 23 November 2025 at the Waterstone College, Main Service Road, Olifantsvlei, Johannesburg South.

For registration and information contact Veronika Smook at admin@sawfa.co.za

Convention Programme:

Saturday 22 November

08h00-08h30: Registration with tea/coffee and muffins

08h30-11h30 Charlene Kopansky

Aqua Extravaganza: Exploring Aqua Core Training with a Splash of High Intensity Intervals

08h30 -10:00: Active theory

10h00 -11h30: Pool session to apply the theory.

Let's explore the integration of the global Abdominal muscles and the Core Muscles into each and every Aqua Move. Learn essential demonstration tips and cuing strategies to educate and motivate your participants.

11h30-12h30 - Lunch

12h30-13h15 – Dr Natalie Aneck-Hahn – Swimming in Contaminants? A Snapshot of chemicals of emerging concern (CECs) and associated health risks in swimming pools

13h15-13h45 Questions and Discussion

13h45 – 14h00 Short Break

14h00-17h00 Charlene Kopansky

Bridging and Linking: Smooth Transitions

14h00 - 15h30: Active theory

15h30 -17:00: Pool session to apply the theory

Learn to design classes that flow from one move to another by building bridges and linking exercises. This linear style of instructing a class can be easily modified to accommodate beginners and to challenge hard-core fitness buffs. The key is flow, fun and focus.

Sunday: 23 November

07h30-08h00: Registration with tea/coffee and muffins

08h00-08h45: Gareth Reynolds (Biokineticist) The link between Exercise and Oestrogen

08h45-09h30: Gareth Reynolds Neurological Disorders and Hydrotherapy

09h30-09h40 Short Break

09h40-11h10: Riette Landman (Physiotherapist) Effective Stretching

Theory and pool session

11h10-12h00: Lunch

12h00-14h30: Charlene Kopansky -Aqua HIIT Training featuring Charlene's Just a Minute Formula (Theory and pool session)

12h00 - 13h30: Active theory

13h30 -14:30: Pool session to apply the theory.

Get ready to make the water boil as you experience three unique ways to integrate HIIT training into your classes. Learn strategies for effective class design and delivery enhanced with verbal and visual cueing to ensure participants maintain alignment and range of motion while applying amplified intensity for a variety of movement sequences.

Programme is subject to change

Short CV's (in order of appearance)

Charlene Kopansky

Hon BSc, Human Kinetics, B. Ed: P.H.E, Science. President & Founder of The Canadian Aquafitness Leaders Alliance (CALA Inc.). Awards: Body Life Germany Specialty Presenter; Fitness Institute, Instructor of the Year; Specialty Presenter, Germany; Volunteer Award Ontario Fitness Council; Who's Who of Canadian Woman; canfitpro Specialty Presenter & Lifetime Achievement. Author & mentor. International Presenter: New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Germany, UK, Brazil, Mexico, Trinidad & Tobago, Martinique, Cuba, Dominican Republic & across Canada. Charlene promotes the joy of movement in water, encouraging the body to move, the spirit to soar and the mind to discover.

Dr Natalie Aneck-Hahn

Since 1992, Natalie has been involved in research focused on male reproductive health. By the late 1990s and early 2000s, emerging literature on the impact of chemical exposures, particularly endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs), expanded her research interests to include human, animal, and environmental health. This led to the establishment of a dedicated EDC laboratory, initially using the yeast estrogen screen, and later expanding to include multiple in vitro bioassays for estrogenic, androgenic, and thyroid activity. She was part of the Global Water Research Coalition project team on investigating effect-based methods (EBMs) or bioassays for water quality and safety.

Her doctoral work involved exposure assessments using bioassays in South Africa, and later, extensive animal studies explored multi-generational effects of compounds like nonylphenol, DDT, DDE, phytoestrogens, and various pesticides. During her postdoctoral research, where she studied the impact of DDT and DDE on male reproductive health in malaria-endemic areas, which evolved to include broader pesticide exposure assessments.

Recognizing the need for integrated, multi-level research approaches, the Environmental Chemical Pollution and Health Research Unit (ECPH-RU) was established in 2012. As its director, she oversees interdisciplinary research into chemical pollution, especially endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs), with a "One Health" approach that connects human, animal, and environmental well-being.

Gareth Reynolds

Gareth Reynolds received a BhSc (Phys) degree - followed by a Bachelor of Health Sciences with an emphasis in Exercise BhSc (Ex Sci) and completed his honours in Biokinetics - BHSc (Hons) all from the University of the Witwatersrand.

While completing his internship at the University, he treated chronic, orthopaedic and neurological patients.

He has been actively working as Biokineticist since 2020 and currently owns his own practice in Pretoria.

Riette Landman

From Riette: After completing a B.Sc degree in 1993, I started my degree in Physiotherapy, also at the University of Pretoria and qualified in 1997.

Having worked in my own private practice from 1998 in Hoedspruit until 2001, I relocating to Pretoria. I worked as a locum at numerous hospitals and private practices in Pretoria and started again with my own practice in Pretoria in 2002.

During 2003, I attended the SAWFA course and qualified as a SAWFA instructor. Although being involved in lecturing the new SAWFA students in becoming instructors, I do not present aqua classes myself.

Throughout these years I have attended many courses to keep up to date with the latest research as development takes place very quickly in the medical field. Having a special interest in sports injuries as well as back and neck injuries, I have completed the SPT1 and OMT1 (now called the NMSPG) courses that help with clinical reasoning in these fields. With the knowledge gained through these qualifications, it assists to find the root cause of the problem and to not only treat symptoms. This way, physiotherapy treatment will be much more effective, and a patient will have much faster results.

I have been working now as a physiotherapist for 28 years.