

AQUA FITNESS

NETWORK

The official publication for aqua instructors

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Pilaqua for ultimate strength and stability

Pilates and aqua based training have one very important thing in common: they both challenge core stability and strength.

Think about it; from the moment you step into the water, whether it's shallow or deep, your body has to continually stabilise itself in order to achieve movement in a correct manner. Your core stabilisers have to work very similarly to when you are in a Pilates class.

I began teaching Pilates five years ago, and what I couldn't disregard were the similarities and natural compatibility between Pilates and water training. So, as a natural progression, one day I decided it was time for the two to meet. And the following exercises are the results of my experiment!

Cross country with noodle

Make a pretzel with a noodle, place one foot inside and perform a normal cross-country action with arms and legs.

Why

Use the noodle to create an unstable base of support = challenge overall stability

Emphasis

To keep pelvis square and facing forward as opposed to twisting at the hips

To keep the distance between the legs even (imagine your legs are the hands of a clock: point feet to 7 o'clock and 5 o'clock)

To keep shoulders over hips

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With an emphasis on body awareness, postural work and stability training, Network Pilates is a safe, effective way of integrating the mind and body to achieve muscle control and balance.

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Pilaqua for ultimate strength and stability

continued from page 1

Watch out for

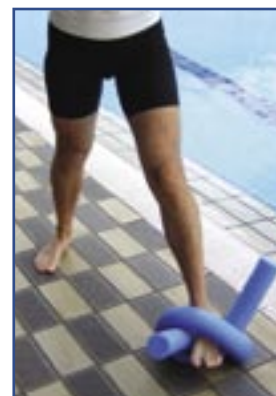
Hyperextension of lumbar spine
Leg on the noodle going too far back
Loss of balance

Options

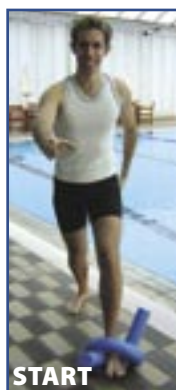
Legs wider to create more challenge



Normal option



Challenging option



Front view

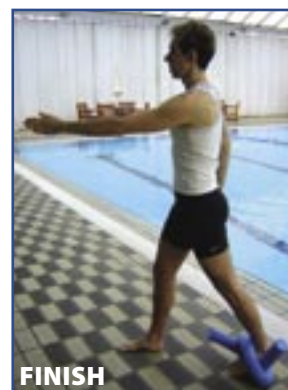


FINISH



START

Side view



FINISH

Side lying with dumbbells

Hold both dumbbells under one arm, align the arm under the shoulder, keep body horizontal, flutter kicks with legs.

Why

Use the dumbbells to challenge shoulder stability

Emphasis

To keep the arm under the shoulder

To keep torso and hips aligned without flaring of the ribcage

To minimise rocking of the body

Watch out for

Arm on dumbbells going toward water surface

Poor neck/shoulder alignment

Excessive rocking

Options

Make small circles with arm on dumbbells whilst avoiding rocking



Normal version



With arm circles



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Editor

Analee Matthews

Advisory Committee

Lisa Champion
Kerri Parkinson
Jenny Schembri-Portelli
Bettina Bokori-Mayman

Graphic Designer

Chai Lim

For all editorial and advertising enquiries contact:

Analee Matthews

Australian Fitness Network

Ground Floor, 40 Oxley St, St Leonards, NSW 2065

PO Box 1606, Crows Nest, NSW 1585

Ph: 02 8424 7213 • Fax: 02 8424 7299

E-mail: analee.matthews@fitnessnetwork.com.au

www.fitnessnetwork.com.au

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Seated flutter kicks with dumbbells

In a seated position, keep legs in front of hips, hands on dumbbells, hold dumbbells under water surface, flutter kicks moving back.

Why

Challenge shoulder stability, core control, spine alignment

Emphasis

To maintain straight back during movement
To keep shoulders away from ears
To avoid tension around neck area
To travel in a straight line as opposed to a diagonal line

Watch out for

Poor head/shoulder alignment
Students holding their breath
Spinal flexion

Option

Hold dumbbells only under 1 arm (still under water) to challenge symmetry (other hand sculling to help stability)



Normal version



Option

If you are familiar with both exercise modes, you will notice how I have tried to adapt the Pilates concepts to suit the water environment. For example, in a Pilates class we lay on the floor, so the first thing I had to think about is how to get the same exercise outcome in a standing position in the water (of course, you can just pick up a Pilates book, turn it upright and voila - you have your standing version!). I had to also think about how to challenge the core without working against gravity, which is where we introduce the use of equipment. And then lastly, I had to think of moves that would combine stability training and cardio training and that would keep my participants moving to avoid them becoming cold.

When you teach these sorts of exercises, the emphasis is on correct alignment, core control, breathing and stabilisation. You might need to spend more time reminding your students to keep neutral pelvis or to align the head with the rest of the spine, to name just a few, important teaching cues.

Another great benefit of doing these exercises in the water is that you realise instantly if you are using one side of the body more than the other, because you start travelling in unwanted directions! This feedback mechanism is another mutual benefit (symmetry) of water training and Pilates.

It is essential to remember, that the added challenge of working with equipment, as well as working suspended make these exercises unsuitable for a newcomer or deconditioned participant. As with all aqua classes, you will need to judge whether they are ready for the added challenge. Ideally, you'll begin by teaching the exercises without equipment, monitor their progress, and if they are ready, then introduce noodles or dumbbells.

See you in the pool! ♦



Mirko Turla

Currently based in Hong Kong, but originally from Italy, Mirko is a group fitness instructor, teacher trainer, aqua fitness lecturer and international presenter who has worked in the fitness industry for the past ten years.

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- **Pilaqua** (SA4X)

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should
be left
in the
past...

... but some things
will take you into
the future.

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