

AQUA FITNESS

NETWORK

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Keeping aqua choreography fresh!

As aqua instructors we are presented with the challenge of keeping our choreography fresh over time. Have you ever found developing new choreography or class ideas something of a challenge, or felt like you've done it all before?

Creating new choreography, or refreshing existing choreography, doesn't have to be hard work. The following simple tools and techniques can be used to create new choreography and ideas for a cardiovascular workout.

Music variety

Using a wide variety of music is a valuable tool in creating fresh aqua sessions. The use of different types of music automatically adds interest to a class as participants continue to be surprised by the next track that comes along (sometimes enjoying it, sometimes gasping in horror!). More importantly however, music variety influences choreography development as you work through the creative process.

Working with a track containing beats other than 120-125 bpm, a different rhythm, or an unusual song structure automatically leads to variations in move execution and the opportunity to introduce variation. Sometimes the result might be a simple modification to an existing move, which feels new and different when performed to new music. Mapping the music is an important part of the process, as is getting in the water and experimenting.

There is virtually no limit to the different types of music that can be used, from current chart hits to country, jazz, and even classical. It can be interesting to discover how musical genres which you, and your participants, wouldn't

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Keeping aqua choreography fresh!

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necessarily listen to on the car stereo may actually prove to be very well suited to aqua workouts due to their rhythm and beat. At the very least, it lets us cater to the diverse tastes in music that many of our participants have!

Music themes

Music variety naturally lends itself to developing both choreography and class ideas based around music themes. Many options exist, with organised action, partner activities, and instructor fancy dress being some of the obvious ones. Such techniques can be an easy method of breaking up the format of a regular class and having some fun without thinking too hard about the workout. The key is in choosing activities that are appropriate for the music theme.

Music themes also provide an opportunity to develop choreography with a flavour associated with the selected music. If disco is your music choice, think Saturday Night Fever, and develop a signature move (e.g. chorus) indicative of the style. For country music consider using the organised action variations provided by line dancing. The actual lyrics, as well as the style of music, can also influence moves – for example, a song about a river gives you a great cue for introducing moves based on travelling up and down the pool.

Arm lines

Focusing on arm line variations is a simple technique to spice up your choreography. A basic approach to this is to take a regular leg move (eg. jog, kick) and start to experiment with arm movements. If you are jogging with regular pushing or punching arms, then try adopting a scooping action instead. A pendulum motion with arms swinging in front of the body from side to side can be adapted so that the hands move through a figure 8 action in front of the body. Experimentation is the key here; subtle changes can result in a move having a completely different feel.

A second technique involves developing an arm line that is used for the entire length of the track and then focusing on leg movements to accompany that arm line. An example of this would be placing both arms out straight with the palms together, sweeping from side to side in front of the body. Maintaining this arm line and adding conventional aqua leg moves such as scissors, front kicks, back kicks, and pendulum swing, gives well used choreography a fresh and interesting twist.

Stationary

Stationary moves may not strike you as an obvious component of a cardiovascular workout, but they can be successfully employed. Moves involving arm speed, such as boxing style moves executed to a relatively fast music track,



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offer a good example of this. One approach is to develop choreography primarily based on arm moves while stationary, and to complement these with basic leg moves such as tuck jumps.

Sustained cardiovascular activity for lengthy periods is not practical during an aqua workout and choreography needs to include lower intensity moves to allow for recovery. Stationary moves can be ideal for this purpose, while providing a resistance or muscle conditioning challenge at the same time (depending on the particular move and its execution).

Variations on a move

Taking an existing move and creating variations from it can present both an interesting challenge, and an easy solution to developing choreography. Start with an existing favourite move and then experiment with elements that increase or change intensity, travel, and resistance. This can provide a great mix of moves for a whole track, all ultimately created from just one move. An example of this is:

- Base move: Front cross kick and side kick using the same leg, pulling both palms through the water in the opposite direction to the kicking leg.
- Option 1: Add a hop or jump on the stationary leg to increase cardiovascular intensity.
- Option 2: Travel lengthways down the pool (or forwards and backwards) using the hop or jump on the alternate leg.
- Option 3: Change the move to side kick and behind cross kick, with other leg remaining stationary on floor of pool (i.e. no hopping or jumping). Keep both palms pulling through the water in the opposite direction to the kicking leg. This changes the focus of the move to include a substantial core strength resistance challenge.

Creating new choreography, or just freshening up some existing moves, doesn't need to be daunting or overly time consuming. The tools and techniques outlined above allow you to do this in a methodical manner, and if you complement them with some basic experimentation in the water, it can be a really fun process. Remember that each new move or idea doesn't need to be groundbreaking or radically different for it to be effective. A fun, fresh aqua class is the sum of many different components, with each small change or idea ultimately creating the final experience.



LEGS	ARMS
Jogging.	Both arms pushing from side to side (leading with palms), across front of body.



LEGS	ARMS
Kicking out to side and crossing behind body (repeating on each leg). Opposite leg stationary on pool floor (no hopping/jumping).	Both arms pushing from side to side, across front of body.

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LEGS	ARMS
Hillbilly Kick – lifting heel in front and then toe out to side (repeating on each leg).	Alternating arms tapping foot in front of body and out to side.



LEGS	ARMS
Alternating side kicks.	Both hands pushing down between knees (elbows pushing out to each side).



LEGS	ARMS
Big alternating front kicks.	Palms together, straight arms sweeping across front of body from side to side.



LEGS	ARMS
Stationary and alternating side kick.	Saturday Night Fever – arms rolling in front for three counts, with alternating arm and leg kicking out to side on fourth count.



LEGS	ARMS
Pendulum swing.	One arm straight, tracing figure 8 in front of hips (opposite hand resting on hip). Repeat on other side. ♦



Tim O'Connell, BEd

A specialist in occupational health and safety, Tim is a highly accomplished freestyle instructor and presenter. Known for his energetic and motivating presenting style, he teaches a wide range of group exercise programs at some of Melbourne's leading fitness centres. He is also a lecturer and assessor for group exercise leader certificate courses in both land and aqua.