

# WHY 45 MINUTES?

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When asked to recommend an ideal class length, CALA trainers and aquafitness leaders often suggest 45 minutes. Participants who are used to a 55 to 60 minute class format may wonder about the motivation for this shorter time frame. This article explains many of the excellent reasons why pool programmers, aquafitness leaders, and many participants prefer a 45 minute aquafitness class.

\* **The effectiveness of aquafitness exercise** is highly dependent upon proper movement execution and participant effort. A time span of longer than 45 minutes is difficult for most participants to maintain full concentration and controlled, powerful movements, thereby limiting the training effect. The more complex the movement sequences, the higher the demands on concentration. Thus, the shorter the effective attention span. A well planned and executed 45 minute class presents sufficient challenge to both mind and body for both the novice and elite participant.

\* **Dehydration Due to Immersion:**

- When standing in chest deep water, or staying vertical in neck deep water, the water exerts pressure (hydrostatic pressure) on the body.
- Hydrostatic pressure increases with depth of immersion. Therefore, when standing neck deep in water hydrostatic pressure is much greater at the feet than at the shoulders.
- The body is effectively squeezed like a toothpaste tube, from the bottom up. Bodily fluids are moved upward, and blood volume in the trunk increases at the shoulders.
- The body is effectively squeezed like a toothpaste tube, from the bottom up. Bodily fluids are moved upward, and blood volume in the trunk increases dramatically.
- Enhanced blood volume in the chest causes pressure receptors in the heart to increase kidney activity by over 600%! This effect is more profound with neck deep (as opposed to chest deep) immersion.
- While hydrostatic pressure contributes to lower exercise heart rates due to improved cardiac function, two problems result from the upward shift of bodily fluids and increased kidney function:

1. Participants may need to leave the pool for a 'nature break'.
  - + The shorter, 45 minute class format is more likely to be within the capabilities of the most bladders.
2. The longer participants are immersed in the pool, the greater their dehydration.
  - + Participants will be able to work their bodies more effectively and with less likelihood of muscle cramping if they are not dehydrated.

\* **Longer class formats require substantial endurance.** Otherwise, participants may fatigue toward the end of the class and be unable to maintain the intensity of their effort. At recreational pool temperatures of 84 to 86 degrees F. lack of vigorous muscle can lead to cold, tense muscles. When this happens toward the end of a longer class, muscle stretching can be difficult or uncomfortable (tense shivering muscles are not pliable).

\* **Static Stretches** (still stretches which are held for 10 - 30 seconds) are not purposeful or required in the warm up of a recreational aquafitness class. A class length of 45 minutes is more than adequate to include:

- 5 - 10 minutes of vigorous activity to warm the body and lubricate the joints
- 15 - 25 minutes of cardiovascular exercise, using large muscle groups rhythmically
- 10 minutes of specific muscle focus work for muscle strength and endurance
- 5 - 10 minutes of deep, static stretching and relaxation

\* **Transition time between classes** or other programs in the pool is more generous, allowing staff and clientele to enter or exit the pool area at a safer, more leisurely pace. This time can be used by participants to socialize with one other, reducing or eliminating the need to chat rather than concentrate during class.

\* **Facilities may wish to offer a lane for aqua walking/jogging** during the recreational swims which take place before or after the aquafitness class. Anyone desiring more pool time to warm up or cool down may do so independently.