

CHOREOGRAPHY - THE ART OF MOTION

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Exclusively Water! 2002 CALA Conference session: Sunday April 28 from 2:00 – 4:00pm

Choreography Techniques

2 CALA, 1 FIS, 1 PTS, 2 NSFLA, 2L AFLCA, 2 SPRA, MFC, 2 CPTN, 2 OFC

Put moves together in a way that makes sense! Motivate yourself and your participants with interesting choreography techniques and patterns that really work. Practice a variety of pre-choreographed routines that build to make the class zip by. This active dry land session teaches you to have fun while still thinking and moving. Call CALA to register.

Choreography is the art of putting motion to music.

The art in teaching choreography is making the movement meaningful and motivating.

In order to create choreography that works, one must first master the movements. Mastering the movements requires endless practice both in and out of the water and a keen observer to assist you in achieving proper technique. The CALA compendium provides an excellent source of movements with detailed 'how to' information which describes each move. Instructors who revisit the descriptions in the CALA movement bank will ensure that their form and technique have not "evolved" into a totally different movement. Videotape yourself or use a mirror as tools for self analysis and feedback on movement execution. You might be surprised by what you see. Nothing speaks louder than a moving picture!

Once the movements are mastered (even just a core group of base moves) the focus shifts to the transitions. It is important to think carefully about

how you are linking one movement to another. Consider both the arms linking and the legs linking. Ensure the tempo from one move to the other move is consistent. After establishing smooth transitions between a series of movements, it is vital to practice the "choreography" while in the water. Resistance, buoyancy and turbulence all play a role in determining if the transitions you have selected and practiced on land will actually work in the water. Once you are certain that the pattern of movements you have designed actually work in water, you can begin to practice your 'on deck' demonstration skills.

The ultimate goal is to link the movements into artful motion and create a blue print of choreography ideas.

Creating your Choreography Blueprint

1. **Develop a flow chart** of your favorite moves. Use an entire sheet of paper to record 4 to 8 movements.
2. **Link the moves** together with a thick arrow. Create a web. Notice that certain moves (the moves which start and end with two feet together, such as jumping jack, narrow tuck and ski stop) will link to all the other moves. Use different colours to draw a clear picture. For example, start with the jumping jack theme movement and use the colour 'blue' for any arrows that transition from this start point.
3. **Expand each movement.** Spice up each movement by manipulating the speed of motion, range of motion, and/or LAPS (light bounce, anchored, propulsion and suspension). Increase variety by changing the complimentary arm actions. Add additional movements belonging to the same movement theme to create more links in the web.
4. **Prepare a template** to use for lesson planning. See a sample template on page 5. Design a blank template that can be used repeatedly.
5. **Identify the goals and objectives.** Design the class based upon the goals and objectives of the participants and/or the class type. Choose a goal or objective that you want to achieve when putting together the choreography. For



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example, if the goal is to improve muscle tone, then the choreography must reflect this goal. Let the participants know what you hope to achieve with the choreography. This will help them to focus accordingly.

6. **Select appropriate music.** Use music that will inspire both you and your participants. Select music that will serve to enhance the goals and objectives of the program. Try the moves on the flow chart to ensure that the music and moves work together. Practice moving to music both on land and in the water.
7. **Plan the class.** Start with one of the movements from the flow chart. Record the move in the overall plan or template. Pick a move from the web that links with the original move and also works effectively with the music. Repeat this process, until several movements are linked together. Then take a look at some of the "expanders", from point 3 and use these.
8. **Try it. Take it to the water.** Practice, correct, and practice again! Add visual and verbal cues that will ensure the participants experience success. ▶

▶ The blueprint or lesson plan is complete when you are happy with the flow of movements in the water. The movement experience is meaningful when the goals and objectives of both the participants and the leader are met through the selection of moves and the final choreography patterns. The next challenge is to ensure that the class remains meaningful and motivating.

Education of the participants is key. This involves explaining the purpose of the movements and teaching the participants how to use the water to make the movements easier or harder. Motivation of the clients plays an important role when including choreography in the class design. Ask the following questions with regards to your leadership:

- 1) Do you offer visual and verbal cues such that the participants successfully move through each phase of the choreography?
- 2) Do you inspire the participants to work at an appropriate intensity?
- 3) Do you create a positive and fun environment?
- 4) Do you encourage safe movement execution?

Sample Block of Choreography for Deep or Chest Deep Water

Theme movements used: Jumping Jack (JJ) and Ski Stop (Ski stop)

Title: "The Clock Lunge" as I was inspired by the dreaded land based 'clock lunges' in aerobics classes.

Movement	Description (uses clock image)	Counts	Speed
Ski stop	R- leg repeater: legs 12 o'clock / 6	8 counts	1/2 T or T
JJ	: legs 9 o'clock and 3	8 counts	1/2 T or T
Ski stop	L-leg repeater : legs 12 o'clock / 6	8 counts	1/2 T or T
JJ	: legs 9 o'clock and 3	8 counts	1/2 T or T
Ski stop	R- leg repeater: legs 12 o'clock / 6	8 counts	1/2 T or T
W ski stop	R-leg repeater: r leg 1 o'clock / l leg 7	8 counts	1/2 T or T
W ski stop	R-leg repeater: r leg 2 o'clock / l leg 8	8 counts	1/2 T or T
JJ	: legs 9 o'clock and 3	8 counts	1/2 T or T
Ski stop	L-leg repeater: legs 12 o'clock / 6	8 counts	1/2 T or T
W ski stop	L-leg repeater: l leg 11 o'clock/ r leg 5	8 counts	1/2 T or T
W ski stop	L-leg repeater: l leg 10 o'clock / r leg 4	8 counts	1/2 T or T
JJ	: 9 o'clock and 3	8 counts	1/2 T or T

The first four movements are familiar. Practice these four moves until you are confident that the technique of the participants is excellent. Next, practice the variations of the ski stop including each of the specified "clock times". When the participants are able to effectively execute each position (of the clock), it is time to try the entire 'block of choreography'.

To make the choreography more challenging try the following:

- 1) Use tempo rather than 1/2 tempo.
- 2) Decrease the number of repetitions or counts.
- 3) Manipulate the counts. For example, do 8 reps of the first move, then 16 reps of the next move, then 8 reps of the next move, then 16 reps.... And so on...

- 4) Add different arms. For example, do one block with set arms, then repeat the block, do the same legs, but change the arms, then repeat the block with the original arms. And so on..
- 5) Change the direction that the participants are facing. For example: first move - face north, second move - face east, third move - face south, fourth move - face west, fifth move - face north, sixth move - face west, seventh move - face south, eighth move - face east, ninth move - face north. And so on...

See you at the conference. Try the Choreography Techniques session scheduled on Sunday April 28 from 2:00pm – 4:00pm.