

Handout

## Guidelines for New Participants

Congratulations on your decision to become more active! Listed below are guidelines to help you ease into a more active lifestyle and decrease the likelihood of pain, injury or discouragement along the way. At CALA, we want you to feel successful on your journey to building and maintaining an active healthy lifestyle.




### Easy Does It

Start slowly (introductory programs are ideal) and progress gradually toward your goals. Doing too much, too soon, too intense, or too often are the four "toos" which can lead to injury, burnout and dropout. Give your body time to adapt to the exercises you are doing. This will enable you to progress to the next level of difficulty when the exercise you are doing feels easy. Choose the less intense options offered by the leader and ask for modifications when you are having trouble with an exercise.


### Monitor Your Effort

How hard do you need to work your body in order to improve your fitness level? Ask the leader to explain how to monitor your level of exertion. If at any time during the exercises you have difficulty breathing; have pain in your chest, arms or legs; feel faint, dizzy or light-headed; you are getting strong signals from your body to slow down and ease off. Let the leader know how you are feeling. Take responsibility to monitor your effort or energy output by using one of the following monitors of exertion.

#### 1. The Talk Test


 Are you able to speak while you exercise? Your rate and depth of breathing will increase as you exercise. However, you should be able to answer a simple question like: "How are you doing?" while exercising. "Work within your breath", rather than trying to "catch your breath". The talk test is one of the most reliable indications of how hard you are working. If you are able to carry on a normal conversation, you are not working hard enough to get a training effect from your activity. If you are breathless and unable to speak during the warm up, aerobic conditioning or stretch and relaxation phases of the class, you are working too hard and should moderate your activity accordingly.


#### 2. Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE).

 Tune in to the sensations from your body that tell you how hard you feel you are working. Listen to your breathing pattern, your heart rate, how warm your muscles are, and how your joints and muscles feel.

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 Select a number from the chart below, which describes how hard you are working. During the warm up phase perceived exertion is between 7 and 12 on the scale. During the more intense, workout portion of your program where you are training the heart (cardiovascular system) and muscles try to stay between 12 and 17 to ensure you get a training effect without working too hard. During the stretch and relaxation phase, stay between 6 and 10. RPE is a useful, reliable way to monitor effort.

 Using this method to determine level of exertion is advantageous because you do not have to stop the activity in order to take your heart rate. Often individuals will find it difficult to find and accurately count their pulse when exercising. Stopping during exercise slows down the heart rate considerably and can cause the body to lose heat too quickly and cool off.

- 6
- 7 Very, very light
- 8
- 9 Very light
- 10
- 11 Fairly light
- 12
- 13 Somewhat hard
- 14
- 15 Hard
- 16
- 17 Very hard
- 18
- 19 Very, very hard
- 20

**Note:** Add a 'zero' to the numbers on this scale and that number will correspond to heart rate. If you rank your exertion level at 15, then this would correspond to a heart rate of approximately 150 beats per minute.

**3. Target Heat Rate (THR)**


 Ask the leader to show you how and where to find your pulse. An ideal location to find your pulse is found on the 'thumb side of your wrist'. Use your first two fingers to feel your pulse. There are various formulas for determining target (appropriate) exercise heart rate for exercises on land. The following heart rate chart is based on a formula using '220 beats per minute (bpm) minus your age'





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as your maximum heart rate. Exercising in the zone between 60% and 80% of your maximum heart rate is sufficient 'overload' for your cardiovascular system to generate a training effect. If you can exercise for an extended period of time and maintain your heart rate in this training zone, your body will get fitter in response to the overload.

-  Exercising in water has positive effects on the body. The target heart rate base on land exercise must be adjusted for water exercise. The hydrostatic pressure, turbulence, buoyancy and thermal conductivity of water lowers heart rate by enhancing the circulation of blood and by cooling the body. Heart rate is difficult to measure accurately in the water. The leader may advise you to use the Talk Test or Rate of Perceived Exertion to monitor exercise intensity instead of trying to find your heart rate.

**THR Formula:**

-   $(220 \text{ bpm} - \text{age}) \times 60\% = \text{lower limit of training zone} * \text{subtract } 10 \text{ bpm for aquafitness.}$
-   $(220 \text{ bpm} - \text{age}) \times 80\% = \text{upper limit of training zone} * \text{subtract } 10 \text{ bpm for aquafitness}$

<b>Target Heart Rate Chart for Aquafitness</b>			
<b>Age</b>	<b>Training HR Range for Aquafitness</b>		<b>Beats per 10 seconds</b>
	<b>Lower Limit</b>	<b>Upper Limit</b>	
20-29	110 bpm	153 bpm	18-26
30-39	104 bpm	145 bpm	17-24
40-49	98 bpm	137 bpm	16-23
50-59	92 bpm	129 bpm	15-22
60-69	86 bpm	121 bpm	14-20
70-79	80 bpm	113 bpm	13-19
80+	74 bpm	112 bpm	12-19

**Preparing For Class**

A light snack within one to two hours of your exercise class and immediately after class will help to maintain energy levels. Fruit is ideal. Be sure to drink plenty of water (at least one litre, more in hot weather) throughout the day.



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**Just Before The Class Begins**

While you are dressed and waiting for the aquafitness session to start, consider doing gentle movements, perhaps a few stretches and drink some water. Try not to let your body get cold before the class starts.

**Wearing Appropriate Clothing**

Wear comfortable aquatic attire. If you have difficulty staying warm during the aquafitness class wear a hat, tights, water shoes and t-shirt with your suit. Ask the leader about appropriate footwear for aquafitness classes. Footwear is recommended for personal safety. Note: Polyester bathing suits will last the longest in chlorinated pools and suits specifically designed for aquafitness are readily available.

**Taking Responsibility**

Remember that this is your aquafitness class. You have the right to work at a pace suitable to suit your needs and fitness goals. You have an obligation to monitor your level of exertion, ask questions for clarification and offer feedback to the leader about your needs.

**Washroom Breaks**

During the aquafitness class, you may feel the need to take a washroom break. It is important that you listen to your body; waiting to the end of the class is uncomfortable and unnecessary.

**Drinking Water**

Be sure to drink plenty of water throughout the day and sip from a water bottle during and after the class to prevent dehydration. Even though you may not realize it, you have the potential to lose a great deal of water during the class. It is important to re-hydrate your body - this will help to keep your energy levels up. If you are not sure when to take a drink, consider taking a sip every ten minutes or at the end of a sequence of exercises. If you are feeling thirsty, this is a sign that you have waited too long. Take a drink of water before the thirst is felt.

**Staying Cool, Comfortable and Refreshed**

If you find you are getting too hot while exercising, splash some water on your face, or dip the back of your head into the water. This will help to keep you refreshed. Or, take a quick 'dunk' and get your head wet.

**Talking During Class**

There may be a tendency for some participants to talk with their fellow participants during the class. This behaviour is disrespectful to the leader and disruptive for other



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participants. If you want to engage in conversation consider arriving well before the class starts and be sure to end your discussion when the leader is ready to begin. You may also want to start an informal social club that meets for refreshments following the aquafitness class.

**Personal Safety**

If you have a medical condition that emergency medical services should be aware of or are on medication, bring your medications or a list of your medication, dosage and allergies along with information about your medical condition to your class. It should be brought on deck with easily identifiable information. Establish a 'buddy system' with one or two aquafitness 'regulars' who will be able to easily identify your personal information, in the event of an emergency.

Inform the leader about your medical condition(s) and the protocol to follow in case you need medical assistance during the class. Examples of conditions the leader needs to be aware of include, but are not limited to: pregnancy, heart and/or lung problems, joint (hip, shoulder, knee, back, neck) problems, poor hearing or sight, diabetes and asthma.

Remember before partaking in any exercise program you should first get the approval of your doctor.

**Drifting In The Pool**

As a new participant you may find yourself drifting from your 'spot'. This happens for several reasons and with experience and practice becomes less of a challenge. If you are positioned beside a strong and/or large participant, they will create a substantial amount of turbulence when exercising in water. You will feel yourself being 'dragged' towards them. Try moving yourself away from these fit participants until you get stronger. With time you will become strong enough to create your own turbulence. In the meantime be aware of the space around you. If you find yourself drifting, continue exercising and take a few moments to return to your 'spot'.

**Water Level**

If you are attending a 'shallow water aquafitness class', the water should reach your armpit or shoulder level. If you are fearful of this depth of water, try to start with the water at chest height and stay within reach of the side of the pool. Let the leader know that you are anxious so that they can stay relatively close to you while teaching from the deck. If the water is below the level of your chest, you risk injury due to impact and you will not be able to use the water as an effective training tool. Shallower water will not allow you to keep your arms under the water. Conversely, if the water is too deep (just under you chin), you will not be able to safely place your feet on the bottom and perform the movements effectively.



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**CALA Certified, Clearly Qualified**

To ensure that your classes are led by a professional leader, look for training and certification through C.A.L.A. (Canadian Aquafitness Leaders Alliance Inc.).

**Broaden Your Knowledge**

CALA offers workshops and courses that are open to non-CALA members. Check out the “Upcoming” web page to see what is currently being offered. Remember to keep checking back for our conference notice. A copy of the “Exclusively 2003” conference brochure is available on our web page. To see what you missed, visit the Past Events web page on the CALA website [www.calainc.org](http://www.calainc.org).

**Aquafitness Is For Everyone**

Give consideration to bringing a friend, spouse or a child to your next session. Encourage others to enjoy what you have come to enjoy.

**Precautions If You Are Pregnant**

If you are pregnant, be aware that your joints are more flexible than normal due to the excess production of a hormone called ‘relaxin’, together with the properties of water that also serve to increase your range of motion. Get clearance to exercise while pregnant from your Doctor. Avoid excessive jumping and twisting movements and keep your heart rate in a safe zone.

**Feedback**

A CALA certified leader welcomes constructive feedback. Become involved in the growth and development of your leader by providing feedback with a nurturing nature to improve their leadership skills. Accept new ideas that the leader has to share and everyone will benefit. No one wants to get the disease called “mental sclerosis” – “hardening of the attitude” and remember, “variety is the spice of life”. Welcome new leaders when your regular leader is absent. Help to build a confident team of leaders at your facility.

**Music**

During the session your leader will play music. The volume of music will depend on the group and facility. Remember it is impossible to please everyone in the class so sometimes it will be necessary to be flexible in the volume and type of music played. If you find the music too loud, and everyone else is happy with the volume then you can move yourself in a position further away from the source of the music, or wear earplugs. Your CALA leader will use visual cues that do not require good hearing.



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**Hold Workshops At Your Centre**

After viewing some of the workshops available through CALA, you might consider asking your facility to host an educational event. This will enable you and your fellow participants and your leaders to learn more about Aquafitness. Information about hosting a workshop is available on the CALA website. [www.calainc.org](http://www.calainc.org)

**Have Fun**

The most important thing to remember next to personal safety is to have fun. To maximize the benefits from aquafitness try to part-take in two to three sessions per week. Be sure to engage your mind, body and spirit in the class. Focus on the exercises and honour your body with a healthy, holistic workout.

**Got Any More Questions?**

If you are interested in getting started in aquafitness, and have more questions... contact CALA. You may not know it, but keen participants such as yourself make great leaders. Take a look at our courses on offer. You can also learn more general information about Aquafitness on the CALA web site: [www.calainc.org](http://www.calainc.org)