



## **Exercise Intensity And Duration – Something to think about!**

**By Rob Duncan, CALA Certified**

Henry Ford developed the assembly line and was responsible for the proliferation of the automobile. The car, and developments it fostered, were partially responsible for lower levels of physical activity on the part of people in the developed world. Low levels of activity, in turn, can lead to heart problems and can contribute to heart failure. So, it is ironic and just that the Henry Ford Hospital conducted a study to examine the role of exercise intensity and duration in patients with chronic heart failure.

The Henry Ford study looked at the possible link between exercise intensity, exercise duration and clinical events. It focused on 960 patients enrolled in the original study with moderate-to-severe chronic heart failure who were randomly assigned to either guideline-based therapy alone or guideline-based therapy plus supervised and then home-based exercise.

Researchers measured the duration and intensity of exercise and found that increasing these parameters improved patients' quality of life and exercise capacity, and **lessened their risk for hospitalization and death**. For example, patients who walked at 2 mph for 25 minutes, two days a week, likely lowered their estimated risk of hospitalization or death by about 10 percent. Patients who walked at 2.5 mph for 25 minutes, five days a week, likely lowered their estimated risk of hospitalization or death by about 25 percent.

A little exercise seems to go a long way and a little more exercise goes even much farther to improve health and decrease the risk of death due to chronic heart failure.

### **Summary**

This study used land-based treadmills and stationary bicycles for exercise. Keep in mind that, CALA Certified Aqua Fitness, Water Running and Aqua Jogging instructors have walking, jogging, running and cycling movements in their toolkit of vertical water training exercises.

Clearly, heart patients require doctors' approval before any exercise. With the 'go-ahead' to exercise, people with heart conditions require a high level of expertise on the part of the instructor - more CALA courses - and a team approach to post rehabilitation and more importantly, preventative action. That said, the evidence continues to mount that exercise has not only a big place to play in wellness but also is a prescription for health. Together with proper nutrition, sound sleep and happy relationships, vertical water training and specialty certification, has the potential to contribute greatly to a decrease in the death toll attributable to chronic heart failure.

## Opportunities for CALA Trained and Certified Leaders

Think about the opportunities available to you. Steps:

1. Do some research on heart disease. Get familiar with the cause and effect, the terminology the benefits of exercise in an aquatic environment (refer to the Aqua Physics chapter in your CALA VWT Manual).
2. Network with a cardiologist or the team of allied health professionals that work with the cardiologist. Let them know how you can help a patient move towards a healthier lifestyle.
3. Log on to the Heart and Stroke Foundation Website... see what is going on with respect to research and various fund raising initiatives. Discover if there is a place for you to promote Aqua Personal Training or Group Aqua Classes, at these fund raising events in your community.
4. Present a plan (to the hospital or clinic or the Heart and Stroke Association) to introduce vertical water training to clients who are headed towards life threatening chronic heart failure, or recovering from cardiac related surgery... think preventative measures... think recuperation... think reactivation
5. Keep detailed notes on the VWT exercises that the client performs including: frequency, intensity, time and type (arm and leg moves plus body position, water depth and manipulation of buoyancy). F.I.T.T. principle, PLUS the reaction of the client to these exercises.
6. Share your findings with CALA headquarters so that we can let the world know how you are contributing to the health and well being of members of the community as well as saving heaps of money for the health care system.

Henry Ford Health System (2009, April 1). Exercise Intensity And Duration Linked To Improved Outcomes For Heart Failure Patients

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Biography of Rob Duncan: Rob is a retired investment analyst now working as a consultant to business and as an instructor in sports and fitness. A certified ski instructor with 30 years of teaching experience, Rob decided to switch careers when he retired from full time business. So five years ago he began his education in fitness with a focus on Older Adult fitness. He qualified as a CALA instructor, a Personal Trainer and Older Adult Specialist, Twist Sports Conditioning Specialist and Fitness Kickboxing Instructor. He works part time as an aquafit instructor in the summer, a ski instructor in the winter and his is accepting substitute assignments that come his way.

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