



Physically**FIT**

# Water Exercise!

## A Chance to Beat the Heat

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Many of us find it difficult to bring ourselves to the gym during the hot months of summer. The heat has a way of wearing us down and making us feel exhausted before we've taken our first strides on the treadmill. The idea of sweating on the way to the gym is a deterrent that often keeps us away from the workouts that leave us feeling so invigorated. If you're looking for a way to beat the summer heat, try water exercise. It's a great way to cool off while burning calories and elevating your heart rate at the same time.

Even if you don't know how to swim, the pool offers a variety of options from aquatic classes, strength training, and water running/walking. While the pool is ideal for those with arthritis, balance and gait limitations, or other orthopedic restrictions, it will still offer a challenging and beneficial workout to anyone willing to give it a shot. The natural properties of the water allow us to feel more flexible and buoyant in the pool. Anyone with tight muscles, especially of the lower extremity, will find it more comfortable to stretch in the water as opposed to land facilitating increased flexibility and hopefully decreased limitation and discomfort. Use the walls and stairs of the pool to help elongate tight muscles. Stretches should be held twenty to thirty seconds and repeated two to three times. Furthermore, the water provides resistance valuable for strength training. While a variety of equipment is available for strength training in the pool, the natural resistance provided by the water itself is enough to challenge your muscles. Pushing and pulling against the natural current of the water will put tension on the muscles and require strength to move your limbs. For a more intense workout, keep palms open with fingers spread to increase the resistance.

More interested in the cardiovascular benefits water exercise has to offer? Several options exist here as well. The most common form of water exercise is swimming laps. **An average 150-pound person can burn about 120 calories in just fifteen minutes of lap swimming at a moderate pace.** Feel free to mix up the stroke to provide even more variety to your workout and keep your muscles guessing. For example, freestyle swimming is a great way to increase your heart rate while strengthening your shoulders and traps while breast stroke will target your chest and inner thighs.



Don't worry if you can't swim, there are plenty of ways to make cardiovascular gains with your feet on the floor. Water walking or jogging are simple forms of water exercise. **You can burn up to 135 calories in just fifteen minutes of water jogging.** Try elevating your knees even higher or kicking your heels behind you for an additional challenge. You could also mix it up with tandem walking (heel-toe walking), grapevines, or even the dreaded suicide drills from basketball camp. These drills will allow you to work against the current you create as you move. For more ideas, try a water aerobics or Aquacize class and apply these exercises to your individual workouts. You'll burn up to three hundred calories in one class and take home tips to try next time you're exercising on your own. An additional benefit to participating in aquatic classes is the motivation and friendly atmosphere working in a group can offer. Before you know it, you'll have new friends anxiously awaiting your arrival to Aquacize and one more reason to fit that workout into a busy schedule.



Janet Koskiren is a fulltime exercise physiologist at FitLife where she works as a physical therapy aid, personal trainer, group fitness instructor, and group fitness coordinator. Janet has been in the fitness field since graduating with a degree in Exercise Science from Bloomsburg University in 2004. She earned her Health Fitness Instructor certification through the American College of Sports Medicine in 2005 and is enjoying her work with the members and patients at FitLife (located in Mount Airy). Janet's passion for fitness extends into her personal life as well as she is training for her first triathlon this summer. With hard work and attention to detail, Janet believes everyone can achieve their fitness and wellness goals.