

# Water Therapy

## What is water therapy?

Water therapy, also known as pool therapy or aquatic physical therapy, is a form of exercise and rehabilitation that you can do in a pool. It can help you:

- Get stronger
- Stay in shape
- Be more flexible
- Have better balance

## When is it used?

Water therapy can help you if you have:

- Pain
- Weakness
- Limited range of motion
- Neurological problems
- Poor balance
- Osteoporosis
- Arthritis
- Fibromyalgia

It can help if you

- Are recovering from an injury or surgery
- Have had a joint replacement
- Are obese
- Are pregnant
- Have low back pain

If you have one of the following conditions, your healthcare provider may not recommend exercise in a pool:

- Bladder control problem
- Contagious disease, such as a cold, flu, or hepatitis
- Sensitivity to heat or humidity—for example, if you have multiple sclerosis
- Wound, rash, or skin problem, such as psoriasis
- Uncontrolled seizures, unstable angina, or uncontrolled diabetes

## How does water therapy help?

There are 3 ways water therapy helps:

- **Buoyancy.** When you are in the water your body weighs less. The deeper the water is, the lower your body weight. A lower body weight means there is less

stress on your joints. This means that you may be able to exercise in the water with less pain.

- **Resistance:** Water also gives resistance when you move. Have you ever tried to run in water? It's much harder than running on land. The resistance helps strengthen your muscles.
- **Water pressure:** Water can put pressure on inflamed joints and help to lessen swelling. Warm water also help to lessen swelling by improving blood flow in your joints.

## What kinds of exercises can I do in the water?

Here are some exercises you can do in waist-deep water:

- **Double leg squats:** Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Bend your knees until your thighs are parallel to the bottom of the pool. Keep your back as upright as possible while you do this. Do 3 sets of 10.
- **Heel raises:** Lift up onto your toes, raising your heels off the floor of the pool. Do 3 sets of 10.
- **Hip flexor stretch:** Standing upright, raise your knee to your chest as high as possible. Do 3 sets of 10 with one leg and then 3 sets of 10 with the other leg.
- **Hip abduction:** Standing with your feet together and your knees straight, lift your leg out to your side. Do 3 sets of 10 with one leg and then repeat on with the other leg.
- **Lunges:** Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Step forward as far as you can with one leg, leaving the other leg behind. Lower your front thigh until it is parallel with the floor of the pool. Then step backwards to the starting position. Do 3 sets of 10 with one leg and then repeat with the other leg.
- **Calf stretch:** Perform the lunge exercise above, but leave your front leg forward and keep your back heel on the floor of the pool, keeping your back knee straight. Hold for 20 seconds and repeat 2 times with each leg.
- **Thigh stretch:** Stand near the side of the pool and grab the edge with one hand. Bend one knee, and with your other hand, grab your foot, bend your knee, and pull your thigh backwards. Hold for 20 seconds and repeat 2 times with each leg.
- **Walking:** Walk around the pool in for 8 to 10 minutes. As you feel stronger, try to walk faster and faster.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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