

Aquafit

Benefits and effects of exercise in water



Aquafit



www.britishswimming.org



Some frequently asked questions about Aquafit

I have a sports injury – will Aquafit help?

Aquafit may help – Aquafit can help many orthopaedic problems but you need to discuss this with your doctor or physiotherapist first.

Who can teach an Aquafit Session?

A fully qualified teacher will hold an Amateur Swimming Association Teacher Certificate in Aquafit. They will have studied and been assessed on safety and technical knowledge and be able to present effective, enjoyable sessions which cater for the varying needs of participants, select appropriate music and adjust the intensity and speed of movements.

Information on how to become a qualified ASA Aquafit Instructor or other information on Aquafit can be obtained from:

The Education Department

18 Derby Square, Loughborough, LE11 5AL

Tel: 01509 618718

Website: www.britishswimming.org

Who can do it?

Virtually anybody; whether young or old, fit or less fit, referred by medical professionals, ante and post natal, with a disability, or an athlete or sports person as part of a training programme. Check that you attend a session suitable to meet your needs, it is important that you discuss this with the teacher.

Do I have to be able to swim?

No – non-swimmers can exercise in a depth in which they feel comfortable, close to the poolside or rail, wearing buoyancy aids or armbands if you so wish, until your confidence improves. You do not have to put your face in the water. And you can bring a friend along to exercise with you. Your teacher will be sympathetic but it is important that you tell them that you are a non-swimmer. Aquafit is an enjoyable way to gain water confidence; many people decide to learn how to swim after joining an Aquafit class.

I have a medical problem that keeps me from exercising – can I do Aquafit?

Yes, providing you have permission from your medical advisor, and are fully aware of any movements, which are contra-indicated. Before starting a class, fill in the screening form at the pool and speak to the teacher, making them aware of your limitations and any particular care you may require. Select a session at your starting level; you can always progress to a more demanding group when you feel it is safe for you to do so. Try to participate regularly. The properties of water enable participants to use movements that may be difficult or painful to do on land. You should exercise within your own limits; exercise should never be painful or cause pain later.

Benefits and effects of exercise in water



Aquafit is very popular and there are increasing demands for well-taught enjoyable classes to meet the needs of a wide range of participants.

Aquafit is exercise in water, a fitness class in the pool, enjoyable, effective exercise without pain or strain. Regular participation in water exercise is recommended to improve quality of life by improving health and fitness.

The World Health Organisation defines good health as 'a complete feeling of mental and physical wellbeing – not merely the absence of disease and infirmity, but the presence of vigour, vitality and social wellbeing – a zest for life'.

Aquafit promotes 'Fitness for life'. In common with other forms of exercise it aims to maintain or improve: **stamina, strength and suppleness**, to **reduce stress** and to **have social benefits**.

These factors can be fulfilled through a well-taught, land-based exercise session so, **why exercise in water?**

- When we exercise on land we are affected by the pull of gravity. On land there can be problems associated with high impact exercise such as jogging and jumping, whereas water has a cushioning effect on the body, protecting joints such as those in the spine, ankle, hip and knee from high impact damage. Buoyancy lifts and supports the body, giving a wonderful feeling of freedom and providing an environment in which exercise movements and relaxation are easy.
- Water offers resistance, in Aquafit this is used to tone specific muscle groups and develop muscular endurance. As resistance can be used to make movement easier or harder, participants are able to work at the level that suits them. For those who already have a degree of fitness or those who want specificity of training combining water resistance with the use of resistive equipment further develops muscular strength and endurance.
- Cardio vascular fitness is improved through lively exercise movements and enjoyable 'aerobic' routines.
- Water movement around the body has a massaging effect, working less used muscles and helping to tone and shape the body.
- The temperature of most swimming pools means that it is possible to exercise and to work hard without overheating the body.
- For Aquafit to be safe and effective, participants should exercise in water at least waist to chest deep when standing; exercises should take place beneath the water surface. Alternatively deep-water Aquafit offers a challenge for those who are fully water confident.

Some unique benefits of Aquafit

- Water is an enjoyable medium in which to work and protects against injury caused through impact with hard surfaces
- Water supports the body, so movements can be taken further, this aids flexibility and suppleness and encourages relaxation
- Water offers resistance to movement which means muscles can work harder without tiring
- The buoyancy offered by water mean that lesser used muscles are also worked giving a better toning effect
- Participants can work at a level which suits them – sessions can be planned for various fitness levels and age ranges
- Aquafit is fun, participants are encouraged to enjoy exercise and at the end of the session to relax

