

Warming up and cooling down

These water-based exercises are recommended by Arthritis NZ to help with a variety of conditions.

It should not hurt to do these exercises, but it is OK to feel your joints and muscles work.

See your general practice team or physiotherapist if your pain or movement gets worse from doing these exercises.

Tell the pool staff and see your general practice team if you feel unwell while doing these exercises.

Warming up

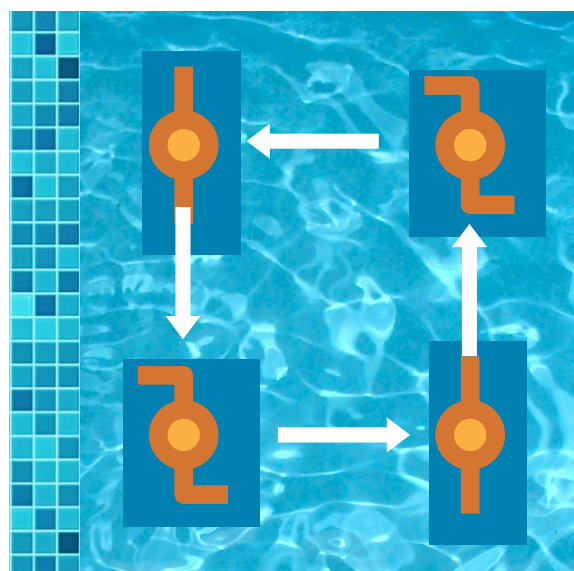
Warm up for 5 minutes.

Walk slowly following a square shaped path:

- Forwards 10 steps
- Sideways to the left for 10 steps
- Backwards for 10 steps
- Sideways to the right for 10 steps

Vary by:

- swinging your opposite arms forward and backward while stepping forwards and backwards.
- lifting both arms sideways while stepping to the side.
- keeping your legs straight like a toy soldier.
- opening and closing your fingers, moving your wrists.



EASIER: Walk 10 steps forwards and 10 steps backwards holding on to the handrail. Then walk 10 steps sideways in each direction holding on to the handrail.

HARDER: 1. Walk faster, raising your knees higher (marching). 2. Hold a float in front of you when walking forwards and backwards and to the side when walking sideways. 3. Walk on tiptoes.

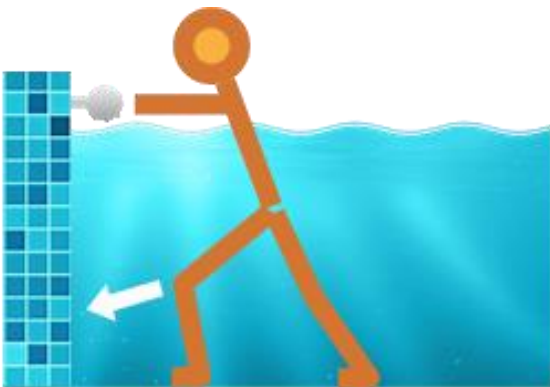


Cooling down and stretching

Ideally stretch each muscle group for a total of 2 minutes. For example, 2 x 60 seconds. You can repeat the warm-up exercises as part of your cool down.

CALF MUSCLES

Push your knee towards the pool wall.
Keep your heels on the floor.
Repeat with the other knee.



HAMSTRINGS

Place a float or noodle under your knee.
Straighten your knee.
Repeat with the other knee.



THIGH MUSCLES

Pull your heel towards your bottom.
Keep your knees together.
Repeat with the other leg.



BUTTOCK MUSCLES

Pull your knee towards your chest.
Repeat with the other knee.



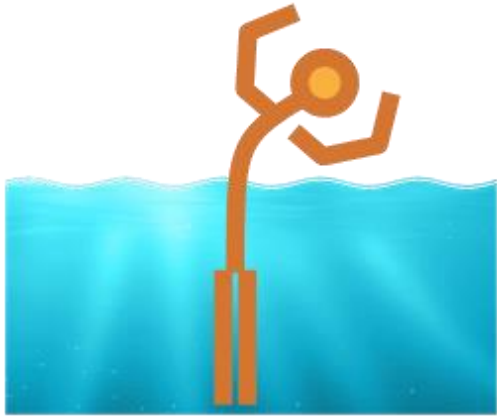


SIDE MUSCLES

Lift your arms above your head.

Lean to the side.

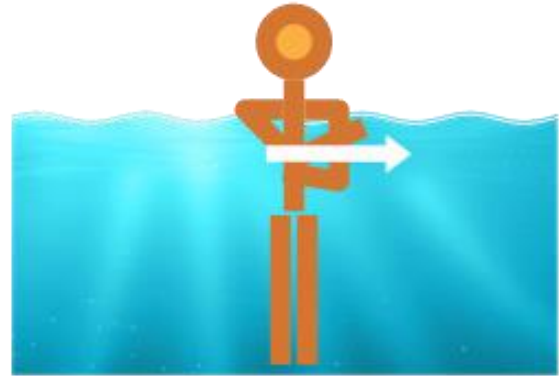
Repeat with the other side.



SHOULDER MUSCLES

Pull your elbow across your chest.

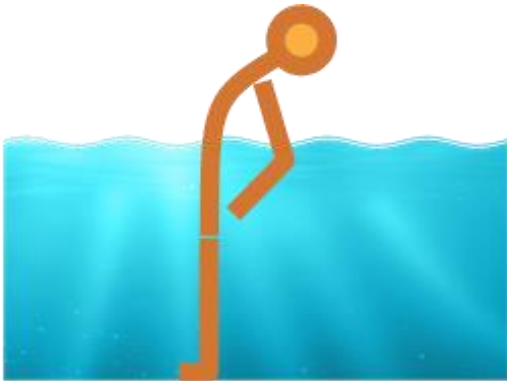
Repeat with the other arm.



BACK MUSCLES

Place your hands in the small of your back.

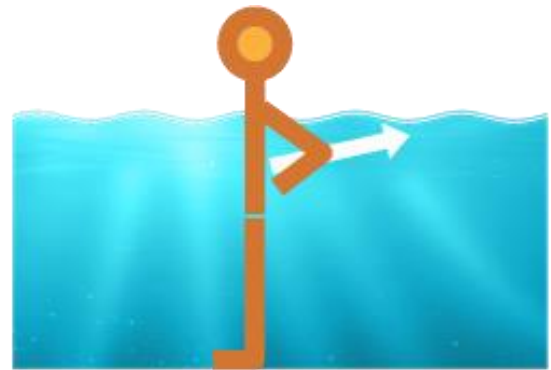
Lean over backwards.



CHEST MUSCLES

Lift your arms out to the side with your elbows bent.

Stretch your arms backwards.



Adapted with permission from Darlow B, Perry M, Chapple C (2013) Water based exercise for people with arthritis. University of Otago and Arthritis New Zealand. This manual was produced as part of a joint project between Arthritis New Zealand and the School of Physiotherapy, University of Otago. Further information and advice about managing arthritis is available free by calling an arthritis educator 0800-663-463 or visiting www.arthritis.org.nz. Last reviewed February 2024.