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# Aquatic Rehabilitation

Appointments 216.444.6262

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Performing physical therapy in the water can be beneficial for a variety of individuals with neuromuscular or musculoskeletal disorders. Aquatic therapy differs from land therapy because of the specific properties of water. These unique properties decrease joint compression forces, may reduce inflammation and provide feedback for improving posture. The resistance of the water during therapy provides a safe environment for addressing balance, strength and postural deficits. For those who may have difficulty exercising on land, aquatic therapy provides a comfortable and therapeutic medium in which to gain strength and endurance.

## Who is aquatic rehabilitation for?

If you have a musculoskeletal and neurological condition, you may benefit from aquatic therapy. These conditions include, but aren't limited to:

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- Orthopaedic disorders.
- Postsurgical cases.
- Sports rehabilitation.
- Arthritis.
- Impaired balance disorders.
- Back pain.
- Chronic pain.

Aquatic therapy may not be recommended if you have:

- Incontinence.
- Seizure disorders.
- Open wounds or nonhealing ulcers.
- A chlorine allergy.
- An extreme fear of water.

## What does aquatic rehabilitation involve?

At Cleveland Clinic Rehabilitation and Sports Therapy sites, the initial physical therapy evaluation takes place in the physical therapy gym, where you're evaluated and your treatment goals and plan of care are established. If aquatic therapy is right for you, your therapist will recommend follow-up physical therapy sessions in the water. It's not necessary to know how to swim before starting an aquatic therapy program. A physical therapist or physical therapist assistant directs each treatment session. Depending on the location, you may be able to access the pool using stairs, a ladder or ramp. Cleveland Clinic provides access to lockers at most aquatic sites.

We suggest that you consider bringing:

- A swimsuit (required).
- A lock for personal items.
- A cover-up or towel.
- Water shoes to protect your feet in the pool area.
- A plastic bottle with drinking water to keep hydrated.

If you require assistance with dressing, showering or walking through the hallway from the locker room to the pool, we ask that a caregiver be present during each treatment session.

## How long will aquatic rehabilitation take?

Aquatic therapy treatment sessions are approximately 30 to 45 minutes long and specifically tailored to meet your individual needs. The aquatic treatment plan is coordinated with a land-based physical therapy plan and varies based on patient diagnosis. Once your aquatic goals are achieved, the program progresses to land-based focus as needed. Treatment length may vary depending on your goals for aquatic therapy.

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