

# FITNESS REDUX: SWIM SPAS

YOU COME HOME FROM A LONG DAY AT WORK, YOUR BACK IS ACHING AND ALL YOU WANT TO DO IS RELAX IN YOUR HOT TUB. BUT YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TO THE GYM IN OVER A WEEK AND YOU'RE STARTING TO FEEL GUILTY ABOUT YOUR LACK OF EXERCISE. BEFORE YOU THROW ON YOUR CROSS-TRAINERS AND HEAD OUT THE DOOR, WHY NOT COMBINE YOUR TWO DESIRES? A HOT TUB CAN BE A GREAT WORKOUT IF YOU KNOW THE PROPER EXERCISES.



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## hether you own a hot tub

or a swim spa, there are plenty of exercises you can do to get the full benefits of the hot water. The buoyancy of water decreases the impact that exercise has on your joints and the heat helps improve your range of motion and increases your muscles ability to stretch and relax. For years, doctors and physical therapists have been using swim spas and hot tubs to help their patients recover from injury and surgery, it's only been in recent years that this trend has taken off in the private sector. More and more people are now realizing that hot water exercise can improve their health, fitness and state-of-mind.

Rick McAvoy, who has his doctorate in physical therapy and is a certified strength and conditioning specialist, has long been an advocate of using water to help people recover from injuries and surgeries. In 2005 he completed a study that found mixing water therapy with land-based therapy increased the knee flexibility and function on patients who had total-knee-replacement surgery.

"A lot of people use their hot tubs to chill out and relax," McAvoy says. "They're in this great environment that you can really benefit from exercising in, and if you bought this thing, why not use it? Why not get full use out of it with training and exercise?"

McAvoy had several patients in his clinic ask how they could use the exercises he was doing with them in their hot tubs at home. Because of those requests, McAvoy, with the help of Master Spas, put together a book and DVD of exercises that could be done in spas.

"I think the thing about the water that I love so much is that it is very holistic," McAvoy says. "I don't think a lot of people really understand how powerful water is and what you can do in it."

Another proponent of hot water exercise is Derek Duke Noble, a celebrity fitness trainer and host/creator of "Urban Fitness TV." Noble has teamed up with Dimension One Spas Aquatic Fitness Systems as their fitness expert.

"A swim spa is the ideal environment for non-impact exercises. Use it to effectively burn fat, tone and heal muscles and enhance your flexibility – all while suspended in the buoyant security and pleasure of warm water," Noble says.

McAvoy and Noble both suggest some specific movements and exercises while you're exercising in a hot tub or swim spa.



**RICK MCAVOY**

For more information about McAvoy's DVD/book visit: [H2XSWIMSPA.COM](http://H2XSWIMSPA.COM).



**DEREK DUKE NOBLE**

For more information about Derek's work with AFS visit: [AQUATICFITNESSYSTEMS.COM](http://AQUATICFITNESSYSTEMS.COM).



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# WORKOUT IN THE WATER

## CARDIO

Warm-up in the water by stretching, swimming laps, jogging/walking and doing deep breathing exercises (figure 1).

## SWIMMING KICK DRILLS

This is one of the top ways to burn calories in the water while toning the muscles in your lower body as you use your stabilizer muscles in your abdominals.

Grab a kickboard and hold it out in front of you as you float in the water. Scissor kick your legs back out behind you and begin kicking for the length of the pool. Repeat 10 to 15 times. You can modify this exercise and use the edge of the spa.

## SWIMMING EXERCISES

- Swim against the current as long as you can, using the freestyle, breast stroke or backstroke.
- Swim with a kickboard.
- Tread water holding a weight or a medicine ball. If done with a partner, pass the weight back and forth.

Use treading water or jogging in the water to recover between exercises. For your cool-down, swim easy laps, walk and do stretches in the water.

## RUNNING IN WATER

Deep-water running is a great, no-impact cross-training activity for anyone who wants to build and tone the muscles in your lower body.

You use the same muscles as running on land, your quadriceps, hamstrings and gluteus muscles, but there is less stress applied to your joints.

Besides walking, jogging and running against the current while immersed in the spa, perform the following exercises:

- Run against the current with your knees coming up high towards your chest.
- Run with your knees pointing downward and your heels coming up high, kicking your buttocks.
- Holding a water weight in

each hand, run against the current while pumping your arms.

■ Keeping knees and feet together, jump straight up while pushing down into the water with your hands (figure 2).

■ Jump up with both feet, your knees pointing downward and both heels coming up high at the same time, kicking your buttocks.

## STRENGTHENING

Exercising against the resistance of water burns more calories than working out on land and it is an excellent muscle-strengthener. Exercises with fitness equipment include rowing, lifting weights (there are weights made for use in the water), pushups holding onto the side of the swim spa, exercises with strength bands and using a kickboard will strengthen your core muscles and your ankles. Do the following exercises:

- Standing on a kickboard submerged in shallow water, tuck your knees up toward the chest letting the kickboard come up under your feet, then push it back down (figure 3).
- Hold the kickboard with both hands. Use your abs to twist your upper body, pushing the kickboard against the current on your right and then on your left (figure 4).
- Stand upright with your spine aligned. Move fast through the water against the current, backwards, right and left, on the balls of your feet and then on your toes.
- Face the source of the current and do jumping jacks while holding the water weights, bringing the water weights only up to just below the surface of the water.

## STRETCHES

Just about any of the stretches you do on land can also be done in the water. When you're finished with your toning, hold the side of the pool with one hand, stand on one foot, bend the other knee and grasp your ankle with your free hand to stretch your quadriceps and hip flexors. ●

