



Program Overview

The Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program was co-developed with the YMCA of USA in 1983 and is reviewed and revised as necessary every three to five years. It contains a basic and advanced (Plus) level and in 2002, a deep water component and a version for children with juvenile arthritis were added. The classes are held in an indoor heated pool, and they meet one to three times per week for six to 10 weeks or on an ongoing basis. Classes are taught by lay people and health and fitness professionals who have attended a one day or 1½ workshop. Although the classes are held in the water, swimming ability is not necessary to participate in the program. The exercises include range of motion, muscle-strengthening exercises, socialization activities and an optional moderate-intensity aerobic component.

Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program Evaluation Studies At-A-Glance

Arthritis Foundation, 1987	One group, pretest – posttest comparison (four months) (n=60).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ↑ function, increased by 25% ■ ↓ pain, reduced 18%
Suomi, 1997	Randomized, controlled trial with women with arthritis; pretest-posttest comparison (n=27).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ↑ ROM and muscle strength in lower body joints affected by arthritis
Patrick, 2001	Randomized, controlled trial with delayed treatment control group; pretest-posttest comparison (n=249).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ↑ function ■ ↑ perceived quality of life ■ ↑ quality of well-being
Wang, 2007	Randomized, controlled trial; data collected at 6 and 12 weeks (n=38).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ↑ knee and hip flexibility ■ ↑ leg muscle strength ■ ↑ aerobic fitness

References

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Suomi R and Lindauer S. (1997). Effectiveness of Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program on strength and range of motion in women with arthritis. *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity*, 5: 341-351.

Wang TJ, Belza B, Thompson FE, Whitney JD, Bennett K. (2007) Effects of aquatic exercise on flexibility, strength and aerobic fitness in adults with osteoarthritis of the hip or knee. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 57 (2): 141-152.