

Aquatic Therapy for Amputees

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What is Aquatic Therapy?

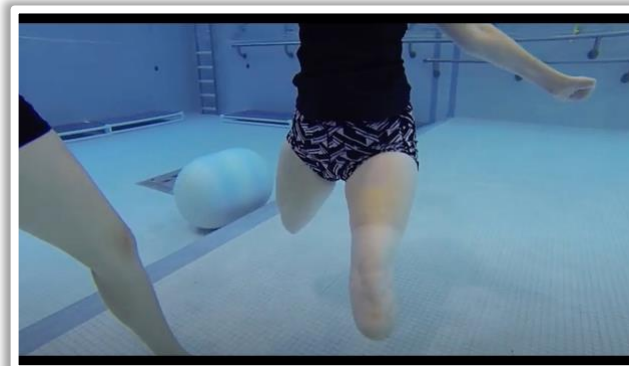
Aquatic therapy is a form of physical therapy that uses therapeutic effects of water to help reduce your pain, strengthen your muscles, improve your walking ability and speed, improve your mental health and quality of life, and generally improve your overall health and wellness.

Prior to starting aquatic therapy, a physical therapist will perform an evaluation to assess your range of motion, strength, sensation, pain, and functional abilities to establish a plan for treatment.



Benefits of Aquatic Therapy

The physical properties of water work together to create an environment that relieves pain, reduces pressure on joints, decreases muscle tension, and allows for strengthening against resistance of the water. Individuals may experience improved quality of life and mental health during and after participation in aquatic therapy.





Equipment

Waterproof prostheses, waterproof covers (pictured left), or no prosthesis can be used during aquatic therapy. Bring your cane, crutches, walker, or wheelchair to the pool—a physical therapist will help you learn how to get into and out of the pool safely.

Safety

Stay hydrated! Bring water or a sports drink and a healthy snack to make sure you are well-nourished and hydrated before and after your session.

Be mindful of water on the pool deck and in the locker room. Bring a towel, or ask if the clinic has towels you can use to prevent slipping on water. Do not run or hop on the pool deck—with or without an assistive device!



How is your skin?

Check your skin for open wounds or sores that might prevent you from safely participating in aquatic therapy. Ask your therapist or wound care doctor for guidance on appropriate bandages if you do have a healing wound.

What happens after aquatic therapy?

After aquatic therapy is done, you can continue to perform the exercises and stretches provided by your therapist at your local community pool. For information on where to continue this aquatic exercise, see a list of local resources on page 3 of this handout.



Local Resources | The Triangle, North Carolina

- **Where to Find Aquatic Therapy**
 - UNC Therapy Services (Meadowmont) | Chapel Hill, NC
 - Duke Physical & Occupational Therapy at Meadowmont | Chapel Hill, NC
 - Duke Physical Therapy Sports Medicine at the Center for Living | Durham, NC
 - Duke Physical & Occupational Therapy at Duke Health Douglas Street | Durham, NC
 - Pivot Physical Therapy—Cary Aquatics | Cary, NC
 - Aquatic Physical Therapy & Beyond | Raleigh, NC
- **Long-term Aquatic Activity for Children & Adolescents**
 - The Sensation Nation--William H Sonner Aquatic Facility | Raleigh, NC
 - Swim Lessons Raleigh—individuals with disabilities of all ages | Raleigh, NC
 - Adaptive Aquatics—Chapel Hill Parks & Recreation | Chapel Hill, NC
- **Long-term Aquatic Activity for Adults**
 - Bridge II Sports—Kayaking | Morrisville, NC
 - Adaptive Sports Programs—Amputee Coalition | Nationwide list of resources
 - YMCA—sliding scale membership fees | 20+ locations throughout the Triangle
 - Duke Adaptive Swimming | Durham, NC
 - Town of Chapel Hill Aquatics—indoor and outdoor facilities, membership and pass options | Chapel Hill, NC
 - Durham Parks & Recreation—indoor and outdoor facilities, membership and pass options | Durham, NC
 - Raleigh Aquatics—indoor and outdoor facilities, membership and pass options | Raleigh, NC