

Aqua Circuit to Work It!

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Course Description

Welcome to a crash course in creating successful circuits- aqua style! We will discuss the different format options, preparation, setup, and leadership skills involved to lead a successful circuit class.

What is Circuit Training?

A station formatted workout. Stations can train an individual aerobically or for muscular strength and endurance, or a mixture of the two. Usually equipment is used.

Benefits of Circuit Training

1. A chance to utilize a variety of equipment, especially if you have limited quantities.
2. Bring some variety of training technique to your classes. Multiple types of circuits can be created to present your favorite exercises in a new way.
3. Group/Partner interaction and teamwork.
4. A chance to reach other markets/demographics with a specific focus or theme.

Types of Circuit Training

1. **Instructor-guided**-everyone rotates through the stations and performs the exercises at the same time. The instructor leads the class as a unit.
2. **Self-Guided**- Individuals or small groups rotate through a series of stations. The instructor oversees the class and assists where needed.
3. **Mixture of Both**- For each rotation, an instructor leads the class through a cardio segment then small groups work at an equipment station.

Circuit Toolbox:

- A layout/map of your pool and stations
- Designated equipment laid out at each station
- Clips for the signs
- Laminated numbers for station signs
- Cones
- Laminated station exercise signs/cue cards
- Colored bracelets for each participant
- Music Playlist & Stopwatch

Setting up your circuit

Leading a Circuit Class is a fun way to mix up your routine, but some advanced planning is necessary for it to run smoothly. Circuits require additional preparation, but once the circuit is designed you can mix it up and use it again.

The four main decisions to make when setting up a circuit are:

1. Define your population/target audience
2. Choose a training type or theme
3. Determine the ratios and timing of your stations
4. Exercise selection

Circuit Formats and Themes

Aqua Games, Arthritis Foundation Program, Boot Camp, Sports, Cardio Endurance, Balance/Stability, Strength, Partners, Deep Water Circuit...*get creative!*

Timing:

Choose a time frame ratio for your circuit. If you have a 60 minute class, consider how many stations will fit into that time frame. Be sure to include warm-up and stretch time before and after. Transition time between stations and the exercise demo should also be included.

Sample Ratio: 4 Minutes Group Cardio: 2 Minute Station (2:1 ratio)

Each rotation takes 6 Minutes. 8 sets of Cardio/Station=48 Minutes total

Sample 60 Minute Mixed Circuit Framework:

Warm-up -5 minutes

Exercise Demo- 3 minutes

Alternating Cardio and Strength Segments:

8 Cardio Segments - 4 minutes each= 32 minutes

8 Stations – 2 minutes each = 16 minutes

Stretch = 5 minutes

Exercise Selection and Layout

First, define your training objective and population. Keep station exercises simple, easy to follow, and target major muscle groups. Consider alternating upper and lower body, buoyancy and drag equipment, or cardio and strength stations.

The number of stations can vary based on timing and pool layout. The size, shape and depth of your pool may affect equipment and station placement. Create a map of your pool shape and number your stations. This will assist you when it's time to set up.

Pool and air temperatures may also affect your design. If participants need to stay warm during muscle segments, include upper and lower body combinations. In a hot environment, incorporate lower intensity flexibility, balance, and range of motion stations.

Creating Your Signs

Make them as BIG as possible. Laminate them because they WILL get wet! Be as descriptive as you can in few words. Label the exercise name and equipment used at the top. Use familiar exercise terminology, or illustrate the exercise. Make the signs two sided so they can be turned around for a second rotation. A separate laminated number will be helpful. When placed with a station sign you can number your stations and mix up the exercises and order next time.

Small whiteboards are an alternative to laminated signs. Write the exercise name and draw it (*stick figures will work!*)! You can erase them and change the exercises each time, and the signs are more durable.

Set-up

Place Station signs in their determined place. Use a cone with slits or clip the sign to the cone to hold it in place. No cones? Clip them to a chair. Lay the equipment out at each station, ready for use.

When participants arrive, give them each a colored bracelet. This determines which group they are in. The number of groups depends on the amount of participants and stations. Aim for even-sized groups by alternating which color is given. Numbering them off after the warm up also works, but can become confusing and time-consuming with large groups.

Music

- BPM Range : Cardio segments = 125-150 bpm, Strength segments = 115-130 bpm
- Music can be a steady tempo in the background to maintain cadence. You will need a stopwatch for monitoring station timing. This also applies if you do not use music due to poor acoustics.
- Pre-programmed music keeps you on track without having to time each station, and is also in compliance with copyright laws.

Professional CDs designed for Circuits and Intervals:

- **Dynamix Music** – Instrumental Interval, Intervelocity series
- **Power Music** – Interval Circuit PowerMix, Circuit Circus, Circuit Workout, Interval PowerMix, Interval PowerMix 2: Sports Anthems
- **Energy 4 Fitness** - A.C.T. 1: Aerobic Circuit Training, Aqua Fitness Intervals (“Sway”)
- Create your own playlist from your music library or a custom mix from a fitness music website. Dynamix Music and Power Music offer this service.

Additional Tips for Program Design

1. After the warm up you will need to preview and demonstrate the various stations. Allow a few minutes for this, depending on the amount of stations. The class can run around in the pool with you as you do this to stay warm.
2. To repeat the program with variety: change the number of repetitions, sets, intensity, speed, exercise order and/or number of exercises you perform for each muscle group. Also vary the type of equipment, length of training, and consider client/participant preferences.
3. Monitor intensity levels and provide options for station exercises as needed.
4. Leading from the deck will be essential, especially when participants are working in groups.
5. Consider your pool depth, water temperature, and air temperature to determine equipment choice and exercise intensity.
6. As station time is ending, count down from 8 to give participants a chance to wrap up the exercise and transition to the next segment.
7. Strength exercises with equipment will require a pause between sets. This allows the shoulders and grip to take a break. Remind them to incorporate the breaks into station time.
8. Designate a “group leader” to help the group understand the station exercises.

SAMPLE CIRCUIT TO WORK IT! CLASS

**For the 45 Min. pool practical, each station is 2 minutes and group aerobic segments are 3 minutes.*

WARM UP (5-7 Minutes)

STATION DEMONSTRATION – Can be done before class begins or after the warm up. Physically demonstrate and describe each exercise station.

-GROUP AEROBIC ACTIVITY

- **STATION 1** – NOODLES: Partner Push-Away. 30 Second Intervals.
Face partner & press 2 noodles together in front. Try to push your partner back.
Options: running, flutter kick, frog kick, mountain climb

-GROUP AEROBIC ACTIVITY

- **STATION 2** – SINGLE BUOY: Squat Jacks/Tricep Press x 15, Cossack Jacks/ Tricep Press x 15

-GROUP AEROBIC ACTIVITY

- **STATION 3** – NOODLE: Mogul Ski x 12, Reclining Jacks – Slow and Big x 12, REPEAT ALL

-GROUP AEROBIC ACTIVITY

- **STATION 4** – SINGLE BUOY: Rocking Horse RIGHT Leg/ Sweep LEFT x 15
Rocking Horse LEFT Leg/Sweep RIGHT x 15 REPEAT ALL

-GROUP AEROBIC ACTIVITY

2nd ROTATION BEGINS

- **STATION 1** – NOODLES & BALLS - VOLLEYBALL: 2 people face each other holding the edge of 2 noodles, they are the net. 2-3 people volley the ball over the net. Change positions at ½ time.

-GROUP AEROBIC ACTIVITY

- **STATION 2** – SINGLE BUOY: Thigh Sweep/ Hammer In - LEFT x 12,
Thigh Sweep/ Hammer In - RIGHT x 12, REPEAT ALL

-GROUP AEROBIC ACTIVITY

- **STATION 3** – NOODLE: Half Pendulum / Plunge Push – RIGHT x 15
Half Pendulum / Plunge Push – LEFT x 15 REPEAT ALL

-GROUP AEROBIC ACTIVITY

- **STATION 4** – KICKBOARDS: Push/Pull Board x 15 Spinal Rotation holding board x 15

WARM DOWN/STRETCH