

Leader TOOLS



Keeping participants focused
on positive lifestyle choices

3rd Quarter 2019 July – August – September

Observances & Resources

JULY 3 TO AUGUST 11 – DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

According to the Holiday Insights website, holidayinsights.com, the Dog Days of Summer are the hottest, muggiest days of the year – July 3-August 11 in the northern hemisphere. This is the period when Sirius, the Dog Star, rises at the same time as the Sun. The Dog Days are a the perfect time to enjoy summer activities to help stay cool and appreciate the season.

- Hop in the pool and enjoy the benefits of the water – cool and comfortable, easy on the joints, ideal for all levels of fitness. If you are not currently teaching the AEA Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program (AFAP), this is the ideal time to expand your leadership skills.
- Head to the beach, lake or river. Stay safe: know your skill limits, swim with a friend and where a lifeguard is on duty, and wear PFDs during water sports such as boating.
- Take the kids or grandkids to a water park.
- Enjoy an evening baseball game with family and friends.

Although it is important to be prepared and respect the environment, get outside and enjoy the summer weather while you can because the days are already growing shorter!

Stay hydrated! Drink plenty of water to keep your body hydrated in the hot summer weather, especially when working out. Infuse your water with summer flavors to add taste and nutrients from the fruits, vegetables and herbs. You can even add edible flowers. Some popular flavors include strawberry & basil, raspberry & lime, watermelon & mint, and cucumber-lemon & celery. Experiment with your favorite tastes and see if you don't drink more water this summer.

Dress for the weather! A light-weight hat that allows air circulation can help you stay cool when the temperatures start to rise and sunglasses protect your eyes from harmful UVA/UVB rays. Don't forget your sunscreen (lotion/sprays applied to the skin and light-colored sun-protective clothing.)

Choose your outdoor time wisely! Outdoor activities are generally better tolerated in the morning (before 10am) or evenings (after 4pm), avoiding the times when the sun is the strongest. An afternoon siesta in the shade anyone??

SEPTEMBER - INTERGENERATION MONTH

The National Day Calendar website, nationaldaycalendar.com, Intergeneration Month recognizes the importance of setting aside time to intentionally connect generations with a goal to better communicate age-related gratitude and needs. And a great way to start is by recognizing National Grandparents Day, which falls on the Sunday following Labor Day (September 8, 2019). This observance is expected to grow in significance as the number of grandparents in the United States reaches 80 million in 2020.

Celebrate the intergenerational experience in your AFAP/AFEP classes by inviting a local church youth group, boy or girl scout troop, or summer camp participants to join your class for a day. Many of these groups are looking for ideas and would welcome an invitation. Plan fun activities that all ages can enjoy. To help you get started, check out the previous issue of Leader Tools for Mary-Lee Costello's ideas for involving your community.



Resource provided by the
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DESIGNING CREATIVE CHAIR EXERCISE

Mark Grevelding

AEA Training Specialist and Program Leader Trainer

Fitness Conference (IAFC) titled: ChairFit – Arthritis Challenge. The session was jam-packed with over 75 people and scary as it was for me, I enjoyed the positive feedback. How did I ever get the nerve to teach a chair class at an aquatic fitness conference?

The Sarasota YMCA offers a popular class called Sit n Fit, which can have between 75 - 100 people in season. Two years ago, I received a dreaded call. The director explained that all options had been exhausted to find a sub for Sit n Fit on the following day and could I possibly fake my way through a chair exercise class? Begrudgingly I agreed and now the clock was ticking; I had 24 hours to pull a routine together. Never in a million years would I have had the confidence to sub this class if not for taking the AEA Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program (AFEP) online.

Planning my routine, I prepared my choreography by selecting exercises from the Arthritis Foundation (AF) manual. Putting together my first chair class was easy because I had a roadmap to follow. The AFEP is based on a lesson plan that includes essential fitness components. Armed with this template, I organized the components in a class structure that was similar to how the Sit n Fit class was taught.

The customized lesson plan I created started with a warm-up for upper body using exercises from AF Category 1 – shoulder and elbow; follow by a warm-up for lower body using exercises from AF Category 1 – hip and knee. This extended warm-up included the flexibility and ROM class component. Next, the muscular strength and endurance component was combined with the cardiorespiratory endurance component to form the main segment of the class – a chair aerobic routine. Following the main segment, I added in the optional activity, which in this case was a short hand weight segment because the other instructors used hand weights in the class. Finally, I concluded with a ROM cool-down, followed by the final stretch and relaxation component.

Naturally, I taught the Sit n Fit class with 100% choreography from the warm-up to the cool-down. No, the AFEP is not based on choreography, but Mark's version of it was (and will ALWAYS be). Defaulting to my preferred add-on and pyramid methods of instruction, all of the seated aerobic combinations in the main segment involved a gradual reduction in repetitions to a final 32-count combination. The wildcard in my subbing debut was the "choreography" thing. None of the other instructors at the YMCA teach the Sit n Fit classes with this kind of rhythmic approach. However, the positive feedback after the first class validated my strong belief that older adults respond favorably to predictable sequencing. Keep in mind, these chair classes have an equal amount of men in them and even they were saying they loved the variety and change of pace. Additionally, I appeased the men by teaching sports-themed choreography to make the class more athletic in nature.

Subbing frequently now, the chair classes have become for me yet another frontier of exploration and adventure. Grateful for every little nugget of information I pass along, these chair warriors truly want to improve their physical fitness and quality of life. Little do they know how grateful I am to them for igniting my passion with fresh challenges and rewards. AEA's Arthritis Foundation Online Instructor Training Program may not sound super exciting, but I am forever grateful to this program for building my confidence to serve in such a rewarding capacity.



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According to the Mayo Clinic, a laugh a day provides multiple benefits such as release of endorphins, stress relief, and more. Short-term benefits of laughter include the following physical changes:



- Enhances intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulates the heart, lungs and muscles, and increases the endorphins released by the brain.
- Activate and relieve one's stress response and increase and then decrease heart rate and blood pressure. The overall result is a good, relaxed feeling.
- Stimulate circulation and aid muscle relaxation, reducing some of the physical symptoms of stress.

However, the benefits continued past the initial laugh. Here are some ways that laughter may help in the long run:

- Improve the immune system. Positive thoughts release neuropeptides that help fight stress and potentially more-serious illnesses.
- Relieve pain by causing the body to produce its own natural painkillers.
- Increase personal satisfaction by making it easier to cope with difficult situations and helping to connect with others.
- Improve mood, lessen depression and anxiety, and may make you feel happier.

Add a bit of laughter and an element of fun to your class with the multifunctional “H Game” during an active rest phase or as a standalone neurobic activity. This game is effective for providing a posture check, good breathing patterns and quality of speech, and having fun. It also creates some fast thinking for an answer!

PREPARATION:

Demonstrate and practice how to speak the “H” words by taking a breath, checking your posture, and saying the word on the exhale. Speaking on the exhale enhances voice quality. Posture check, inhale, speak on exhale as you say a word such as “hot dogs”.

HOW TO PLAY:

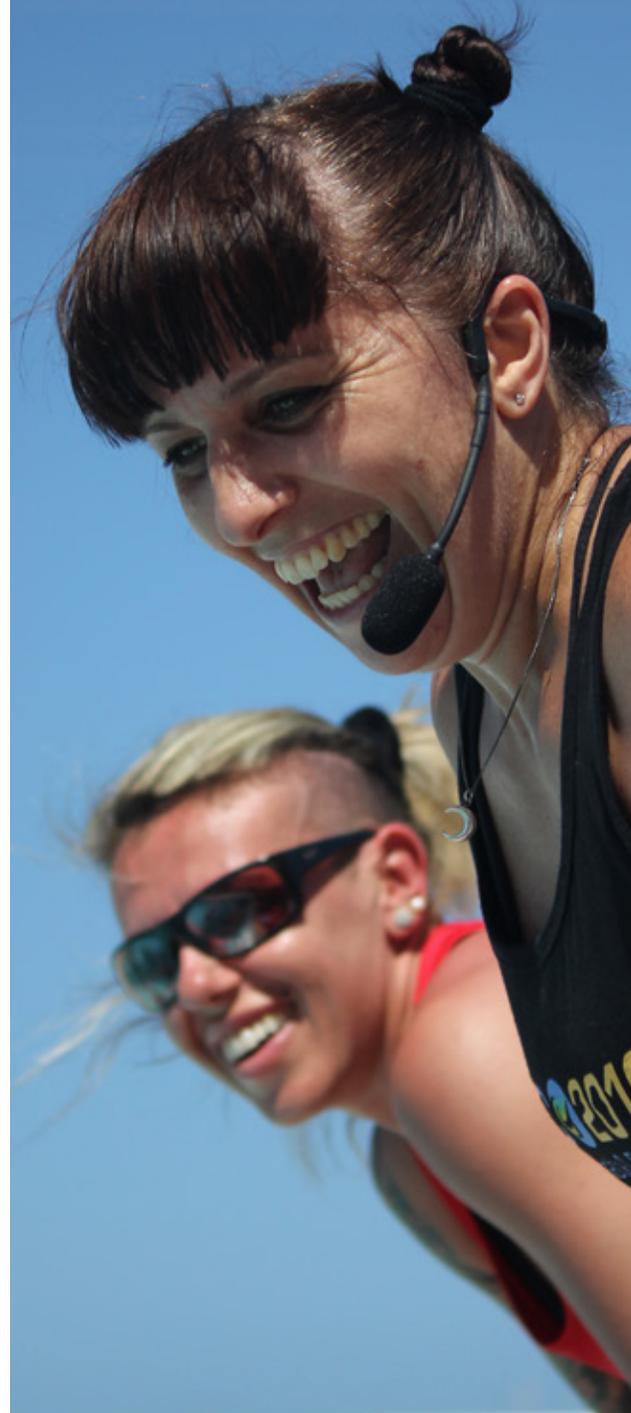
Stand in a circle to facilitate each person taking a turn. In the water, you will want to keep participants moving to prevent them from getting chilled; March, Side Step, or Wooden Soldier exercises are good choices.

Set up the game with, “I’m going to the supermarket after class and will buy _____” Each person fills in the blank with something that begins with the letter H, and repeats are not allowed.

Have a few items in your memory bank because it always happens that someone had an item in mind and a person before them used it first. A few ideas include honey / honeydew / hot sauce / ham. Or, you can add “buns” to “hot dogs” or “hamburgers” if those words have been spoken. Be prepared for “jalapeno” or “jicama” to come up as they have the “H” sound, and everyone really laughs at those answers. But that’s the point, because laughter truly is the best medicine!

IT IS A LAUGHING MATTER

Helen Tilden, Program Leader Trainer



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OSTEOARTHRITIS OF THE HAND

*Excerpt from: A Helping Hand, Water Exercise for OA
By Ronni Taylor*

Osteoarthritis is known as the “wear and tear” form of arthritis; because of this, many older adults will be affected by this disease. Influencing over 20 million adults in the United States, osteoarthritis (OA) is a common degenerative disease characterized by pain, swelling and inflammation of the joints. Those diagnosed with OA often experience the effects in their hands as the bones, cartilage and ligaments within their fingers and wrists are affected. As one ages, the risk of arthritis in the hand increases, as the joints are being used daily (Zhang 2002). The impact, force and daily range of motion hands endure are a few reasons why OA in the hand is becoming more common. Protecting the joints by strengthening the muscles of the hand, wrist and forearm, as well as enhancing range of motion, are key to managing hand osteoarthritis.

The bones of our body are covered in a smooth, connective tissue known as cartilage. Cartilage permits two bones at a joint to slip past each other without causing damage to the bone itself. While our bodies naturally have cartilage, as one ages, the cartilage breaks down because of the daily movements produced. Once the cartilage is gone, the bones grind against each other, causing pain, decreased mobility and inflammation. In some cases, severe deformity and complete loss of range of motion can occur (NIH).

OA of the hand is often characterized by pain and stiffness in the joints, loss of dexterity, weakened grip strength, inflammation and loss of mobility (Zhang 2002). Dexterity, grip and mobility are often measured by specific tools such as dynamometers and goniometers, which help determine the severity of the disease. While pain and stiffness are relative to the patient, self-reported

tests like the AUSCAN questionnaire can help better comprehend the individual’s symptoms (Hochberg 2000). Although OA cannot be cured, understanding and assessing the progression is the first step in the rehabilitation process.

The programming created for those with hand OA should involve strengthening and range of motion exercises for the muscles of the hand and forearm. Most individuals with OA are older adults, and it is important that we keep the session relatable and enjoyable. Including movements that mimic the participants activities of daily living will also be key to the rehabilitation process.

Hand OA affects many people, but it does not need to control their lives. Helping individuals to manage symptoms and creating a movement plan tailored for their unique lives are ways to slow the progression of this disease. To learn more, read the full article, *A Helping Hand, Water Exercise for OA*, which will be available in the August/September 2019 issue of *Akwa* magazine found at the members area of AEA’s website. Not already an AEA Member? Join now to have access to all the benefits!

www.aeawave.com/Membership.aspx



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OVERCOMING A FEAR OF WATER

Sue Nelson, Aquatic Programming Specialist for USA Swimming

Summer brings thoughts of fun days at the pool, relaxing weekends on the lake, and vacations at the beach. Water also provides an optimum exercise environment for people of all ages and abilities. However, many people never explore aquatic activities due to fear and/or lack of access. Every teen and adult should know how to move through the water, either vertically or horizontally. The ability to walk or swim in any body of water allows for safe recreation and exercise.

My children had daily access to water because of our profession and they played in water before they even learned to walk. Very early on they learned respect for the water and developed a feel for how to move safely in this environment. Lack of exposure to water at an early age can precipitate fear and keep people from feeling comfortable in and around water. People may be deterred by their own negative experiences or the negative experiences of those close to them. For example, failed efforts in swim lessons or aquatic programs that neglected to meet their needs and address their fears.

I learned long ago that there is never just one way to accomplish a task. With that in mind, I set out to find a way to help these individuals. When I analyzed my adult fitness program, I found that many were interested in learning to swim but were uncertain that they could learn at a late age. I began using a program called Ai Chi to enhance their comfort level and to give them confidence moving in the water in different body positions. After this was achieved, most naturally wanted to learn more.

Ai Chi is a form of aquatic exercise used for recreation, relaxation, fitness, and physical rehabilitation. Based on elements of qigong and Tai chi chuan, Ai Chi uses breathing techniques and progressive resistance training in the water to relax and strengthen the body. The next step is to introduce the idea of floating and moving in the horizontal plane. At this point, if you are not comfortable with actually teaching someone to swim, reach out

to the learn-to-swim professional in your aquatic center and work together.

Ai Chi techniques can provide for a smooth transition to horizontal movement in the water, facilitate trust, and help overcome the fear of water. Ai Chi Preparing, Let's Get Comfortable Before Mastering Swimming Skills is a workshop that can help you, as an AFAP Program Leader or an aquatic fitness professional, to teach others to enjoy moving in water without fear.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- To find a location for adult swim lessons near you, please visit the U.S. Masters Swimming website at www.usms.org/alts/altsinstrsearch.php
- If you would like to become a certified swim instructor check out how by clicking the link, www.usms.org/content/alts_cert
- If you want more information on Ai Chi Preparing contact Sue Nelson at snelson@usaswimming.org
- If you are not currently an AEA Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program (AFAP) leader and want to learn more, visit the AEA website.

Consider helping your class participants to explore the wonders of water, including both vertical and horizontal training options.



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