

MAKING ORDINARY CLASSES EXTRAORDINARY:

VARIATIONS, COMBINATIONS AND BUILDING BLOCKS

AUTHOR'S BIO



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With over 15 years experience instructing aquatic fitness, Dom is a qualified Cert IV Workplace Trainer and Assessor. The owner of Aquagility, a successful Sydney-based swim school and aquatic fitness business, Dom's years of experience training in the corporate and community environment have spawned his passion for empowering people to achieve their fitness goals. Dom can be contacted on aquagility@yahoo.com



AUTHOR'S BIO



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With her experience of aqua fitness, outdoor training sessions and specialized aquatic rehabilitation for people with physical disabilities, Manal brings real diversity to the aqua arena. Her boundless energy translates to dynamic aquatic fitness classes and outdoor sessions which she runs in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs and Inner West. Manal can be contacted on mrg_fitness@yahoo.com.au



An effective aqua class is dependent on a number of factors:

- water temperature
- choice of music
- class format
- choice of moves and routines
- an instructor's ability to challenge and motivate a variety of participants within the one class.

Some of these factors, such as pool temperature, can be beyond the control of the instructor, whereas others can be determined by an instructor's motivation to present an extraordinary class.

The secret to success as an instructor is to continually challenge participants, regardless of age. It is important to plan classes using a simple format that guarantees a consistently great workout but avoids the need for lengthy preparation.

The following are important contributors to the success of any class:

- use of fun and age-appropriate music that motivates and puts a smile on participants faces
- flexible class formats which keep participants attentive

- moves and routines that challenge participants to work to optimal, yet safe, levels.

To ensure each move and routine is effective, participants must understand:

- how to physically co-ordinate each move
- the muscle group/s that are being exercised
- that great results can be achieved by exercising to optimal level
- which exercises or movements are potentially unsafe.

The use of variations, combinations and building blocks within an aquatic fitness class allows instructors to better structure a flexible class format and avoids the need to improvise or repeat routines.

VARIATIONS

This involves using the same base move but varying one or more aspects of that move to work different muscles without greatly affecting the intensity of the exercise, e.g. while running you can vary the upper body by pushing palms, punching fists, scooping hands or placing the hands on the hips.

Variations can be used when instructing the Rocking Horse.



1



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In the photo above Rocking Horse is being demonstrated with a straight leg lift on front leg and a heel lift on back leg; arms sweep in and out laterally.

Numerous variations can be applied to this move. Here are some options to vary arms and legs:

front leg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knee lift • straight leg lift
back leg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • back karate kick • heel lift
arms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • double arm deep pull/push running thumbs past hips • lateral pull out wide under the surface of the water • short lever arms with elbow flex working biceps/triceps

As well as variations for arms and legs you can vary the move so that it does not remain static; for example moving the exercise forwards or round in a circle.

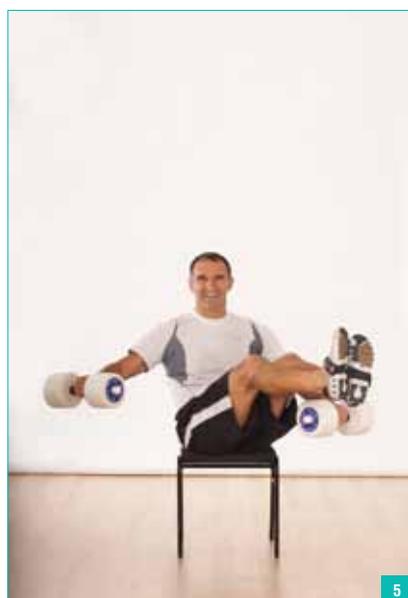
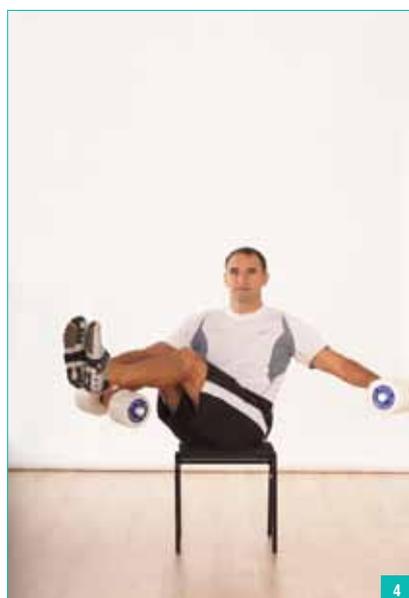
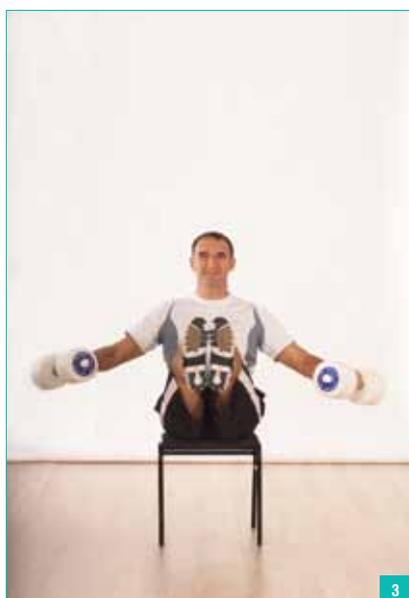
COMBINATIONS

Combining two familiar moves makes it possible to sustain one move, so that participants feel specific muscles working or their heart rate rising, while using a second move to keep the routine dynamic.

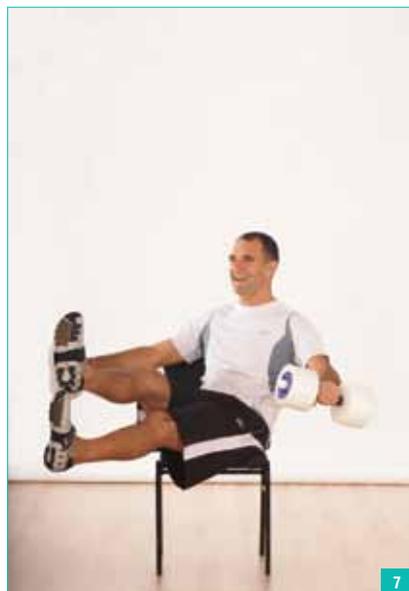
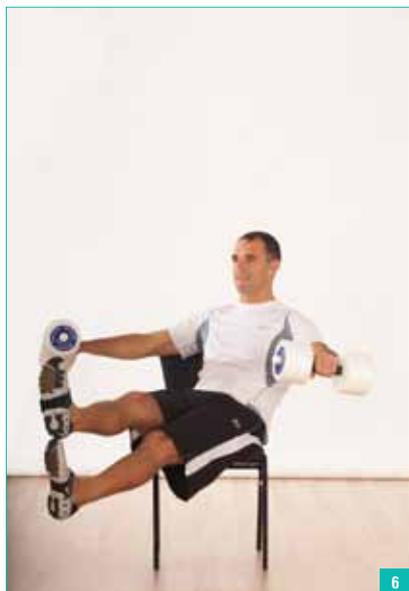
Combinations can be used with most moves. It is important to consider the ease of transition between moves and the muscle groups being used.

A combination of abdominal workouts, such as those shown below, is a great way to overload the muscles and build strength.

WINDSCREEN WIPER (photos 3, 4 & 5)



DOUBLE STRAIGHT LEG V-SITS (photos 6, 7 & 8)



CROSSED LEG CRUNCH (photo 9)

Running moves are also easy to combine. From a base running movement you can add a hover run which works abdominals and elevates intensity (photos 10, 11, 12 & 13).

BUILDING BLOCKS

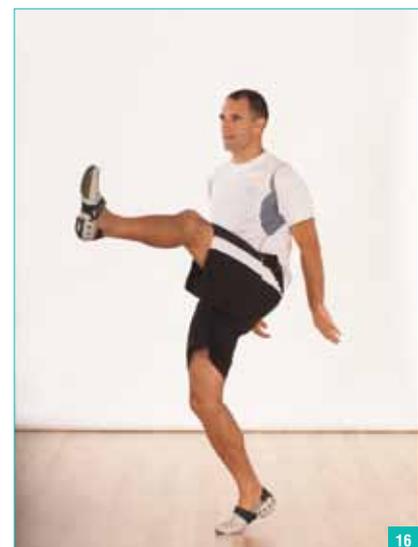
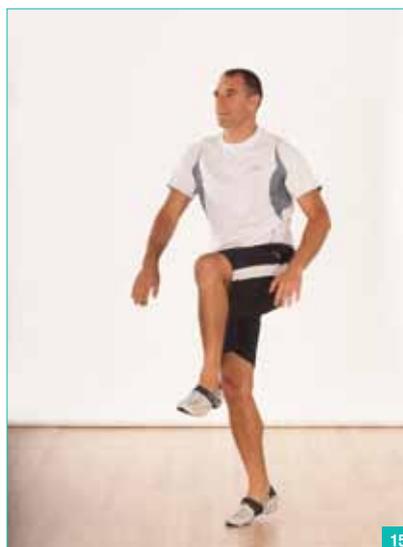
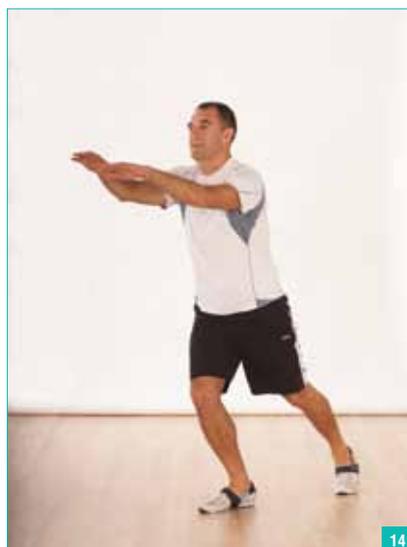
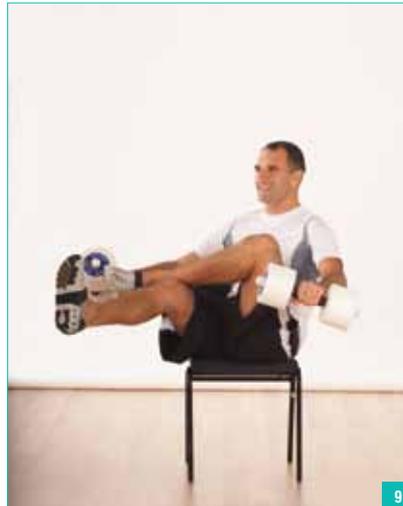
When using a base move in its simplest form it is possible to add layers to change the speed, intensity and degree of difficulty. This gives participants the option of staying at a certain level when they feel they have reached their safe and optimal level.

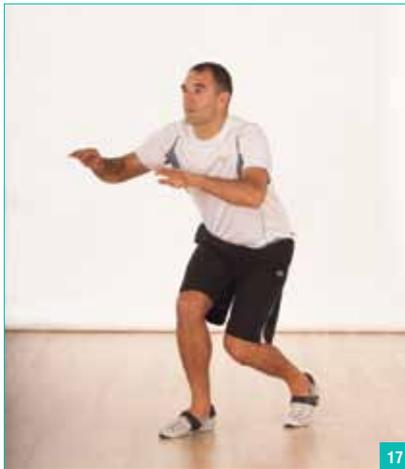
Cross Country is a good example of a base exercise upon which a routine can be built by moving from base to rebound, suspended and dynamic suspended (lifting shoulders and chest above water level).

Another example is **Single Leg Karate Kick (photos 14, 15 & 16)** as your base move which you can build with the following layers:

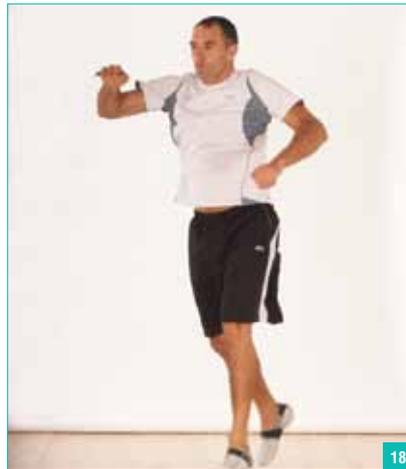
- Increase power from upper body on pull down and lift

- Add bounce on standing leg to increase speed
- Add scissor kick move to increase intensity.

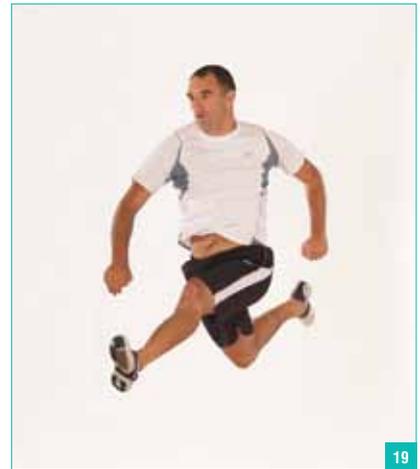




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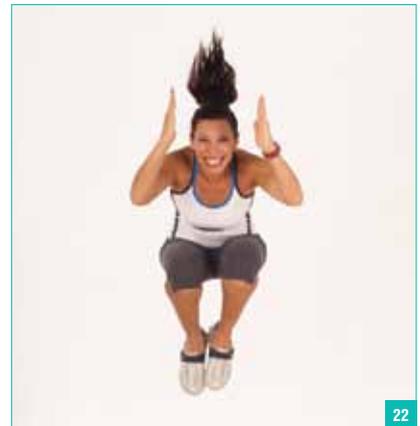
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Scissor Kick continues the form of single leg karate kick but requires both legs to lift off the floor and then cross twice to land in original position (photos 17, 18 & 19).

The Basic Tuck Jump, albeit a medium to high intensity movement, dramatically increases in difficulty by adding a half or full turn to make it a loop jump (photos 19, 20, 21 & 22).

Care should be taken with the loop jump variation to keep knees soft and land with heels down.

For more athletic participants a higher jump and greater degree of turn will work the heart rate.

SAMPLE CLASS PLAN

Once you have planned routines around your base moves (such as Cross Country, Jumps, Running, Rocking Horse and Pendulum) and muscle groups, you can use this sample class plan to prepare a dynamic class that will keep participants coming back for more. 



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COMPONENT	BASE MOVE/ MUSCLE GROUP	FOCUS Variations, Combos or Building Blocks	EQUIPMENT
Warm-up			
Cardio 1			
Cardio 2			
Cardio 3			
Strength 1			
Strength 2			
Strength 3			
Cooldown			



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