

FIND YOUR POINT OF DIFFERENCE... AND USE IT!

Manal Garcia explains how to go from timetable filler to timetable thriller. It's all in your point of difference.

What's your point of difference (POD)? Aqua instructors are, fundamentally, performers, trainers and educators. However, it's our point of difference and ability to stand out from the crowd that makes clients want to come back to our classes. Whether it's the way you explain technique, your distinctive music choice, your unique appearance or your cutting-edge moves, everyone has a point of difference. By capitalising on yours, you can gain a loyal following and maximise your impact as an instructor.

Personally, I love the performance aspect of the instructor's role. I play fun, exciting music, shimmy, shake and go a little crazy with all my classes. And while some participants are more open to that extra shimmy than others and only a few will sing along, they all participate with a smile on their face. Importantly, they keep coming back and remember me for my point of difference.

A colleague who is an excellent instructor, is very technique-focused. After his classes I often hear participants groaning about the pain they have just endured – yet they keep returning week after week (and groan even more if he is away and unable to put them through their paces!). Why? In addition to the results they achieve, they know what they are in for – his point of difference is his 'tough love' approach to aquatic fitness.

Add flare

The following examples demonstrate how you can add flare to your instruction, and help make a real impression on your participants.

THE UPPERCUT (PHOTOS 1 & 2)

Try this different take on a familiar move. When sped up to match Bollywood-style music, the uppercut move becomes fresh, new and fun. Add a wide stance squat for lower body and core work, and for an interesting variation take it a step further with a wide stance tuck jump. Alternatively, travel sideways, forwards or backwards. Experiment with these elements while maintaining the same arm movements to add variety and spice to your participants' workout.



HEART ATTACK STEP (PHOTOS 3 & 4)

Using the same Bollywood-style music, with arms below the water surface, adopt a beating heart motion with palms facing the body. Options are endless with this simple move. With stationary legs, pulse on the left side for at least 8 beats for a great muscle overload and muscle conditioning challenge, before changing to the right side. Another option is to alternate side-to-side, increasing speed to really challenge your participants' cardiovascular ability.

Arms out of water

Don't be afraid to take arms out of the water every now and then. 'Where's the resistance?' you may ask. I'm not advocating an entire class with overhead claps, but if your participants are able to do so, instruct them to take their arms up every now and then. They may appreciate the variety. Be sure to give a below-the-shoulder option for those who cannot raise their arms above their head. Here are a couple of fun examples of moves which take the arms out of the water.

THE KNEE/ ELBOW OBLIQUE CRUNCH (PHOTO 5)

This move is great fun travelled in all directions, hopped, jumped, sped up or alternated. Changing the focus of the move creates different core strength resistance challenges.

THE ROLL (PHOTOS 6, 7 & 8)

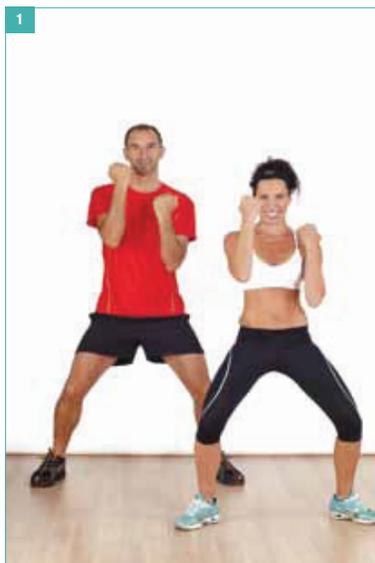
The roll opens up endless possibilities for adaptation. It can go side-to-side, be slowed down, made larger or reversed. Try adding cross country legs to a roll to create a very challenging move!

I use the techniques and exercises above to express my point of difference when instructing. Depending on how you adapt them, they could also be the basis of your own innovative classes. If flamboyant movement isn't your thing, however, then something else will be. Find *your* point of difference and use it to enhance your success as an instructor. **n**

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What is your point of difference?

- Friendly and approachable
- Great motivator
- Professional and well presented
- Background in adult education
- Brings experience to the class
- Ability to adapt routines to different levels
- Always bringing new ideas to class
- Superior technical knowledge
- Great entertainer
- Comedian
- Excellent communicator
- Tough love
- Strict crowd controller





Manal Garcia

With her experience of aqua fitness, outdoor training and specialised aquatic rehabilitation for people with physical disabilities, Manal brings real diversity to the aqua arena. Her boundless energy translates to dynamic aqua classes and outdoor sessions which she runs in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs and Inner West. For more information, email mrg_fitness@yahoo.com.au or visit www.manalgarcia.weebly.com

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