Upper Limb Hydrotherapy Programme

**Exercising in water**

Benefits of using the hydrotherapy for rehabilitation after injury include; off-loading the painful joints; assists blood flow around the body by stimulating circulation; the warmth of the hydrotherapy pool allows muscles and other tissues to relax therefore increasing mobility of joints and decreasing pain; allows the chance to physically exercise and improve cardio function and allows the body to move in normal movement patterns. When undertaking a hydrotherapy programme the length of the programme should take between 25-30 minutes. When you feel the programme is becoming easier to manage then try to step up the time the programme lasts for, for example 30-35 minutes. Remember to take drinking water to a hydrotherapy pool as the warm water means that you are likely to dehydrate. This programme should be attempted at least twice a week with a view to progress this to three times a week when your body becomes accustomed to this type of exercise.

**Aerobic Exercises**

**Aqua Jogging**

Wearing an Aqua belt start with a light jog around the pool to warm-up.

Do two laps clockwise around the pool followed by two laps anti-clockwise.

When aqua jogging interspace the work with sets of stretching every 4 laps to allow recovery and loosen off before continuing the programme.

Increasing difficulty: running with hands out of the water, Back straight and tall or increase the speed of the running.
**Kicking with a float**

Instructions: Kick from the hip

- Relax knees/feet
- Small amplitude
- High rate

To increase difficulty:

- Increase speed of kick
- Vary the depth of legs

(deeper = harder, shallower=easier)

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**Stretching Exercises**

**Chest**

Stand parallel to the wall

Stretch arm behind body parallel to the shoulder.

Keeping arm against the wall, turn your chest away from the wall.

This should be held for between 20 – 30 seconds and repeat on both arms.
**Triceps**

Reach behind head with hand.

Use opposite hand to apply a downward pressure through the elbow alternatively hold a towel and with the opposite hand assist by pulling the towel down.

Stretch should be felt down the back of the arm.

This stretch should be held for between 20-30 seconds and repeated on both arms.

**Internal Rotators**

Standing with your hand on a pole/wall

Turn torso towards opposite arm while keeping other arm against pole/wall with the elbow tucked in beside the body.

Hold for 20-30 seconds.

**External Rotators**

Bring hand behind your back.

Walk your thumb up towards your shoulder blades.

To assist movement hold a towel in hand and use opposite hand to pull hand up back.

Hold for 20 – 30 seconds.
**Strengthening Exercises**

**Obliques -**

Standing in chest/waist depth of water

Hold float in two hands.

Rotate torso through 180° with float on top/underneath the water level

Try to draw arch in the water

You should feel the muscles in your side working

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**Triceps -**

With water weights or floats horizontal to the water

From elbows bent straighten these underwater till down by sides

Perform the movement slowly to control the speed of the weights

Begin with three sets of 10 repetitions.
**Chest and Upper back**

With a Float in two hands

Push/pull water away and towards the body.

Vary the angle and the speed of the float to change the difficulty.

Aim for three sets of ten repetitions.

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**Internal rotators**

With hand against pole/wall

Keeping elbow close to body try to bring your hand towards your body.

Repeat 5 times holding for 10 seconds each repetition.

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**External rotators**

Standing against the wall with forearm resting against the wall

Push hand into the wall

Repeat 5 times holding for 10 seconds each repetition.