

The cool

workout

Summer's here and that sounds the death knell for everything outdoor-sy. The good news is, this is when jumping into the swimming pool is more tempting than ever. Here's everything you need to know about why you should swim, and even if you can't, how you can still work out in water. Go ahead, splash your way to fitness.

TEXT: **BERNADETTE ABRAHAM**; PHOTOS: **SILVIA BARON**

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMAIN physically active year round, even though the extreme weather and humidity here make most outdoor activities difficult. The best way to embrace the heat and stay in shape this summer is to jump into the pool and get some exercise. Not only does the water help keep the body cool, it also provides a great toning and aerobic workout without ever experiencing that sweaty or sticky feeling.

Swimming is one of the best exercises there is. It is ideal for almost anyone and addresses all of the fitness components, like building muscle strength, increasing cardiovascular endurance and flexibility. Furthermore, swimming is the most injury-

free activity because the buoyancy of the water alleviates much of a person's weight. It targets all of the major muscles groups in the body such as the legs, back, arms, shoulders and stomach, which makes swimming an overall body workout.

It also strengthens the heart and helps increase the circulation of oxygen to the working muscles. If that's not reason enough, aside from the physical benefits, swimming is very therapeutic for the mind and soul. The pressure of the water massages the body and leaves a person feeling refreshed and rejuvenated.

For those interested in losing weight, swimming also offers the opportunity to

burn calories. The total number of calories burned however, depends upon personal factors - your weight, the duration spent performing the activity, and the type of activity performed.

To calculate the caloric cost, simply multiply your weight in kilograms by the duration in minutes and the activity factor (Calorie Cost = Weight (kg) x Duration (minutes) x Activity Factor). For light swimming, the activity factor is 0.10 and for moderate swimming, the activity factor is 0.14. For example, a 60 kg woman who swims moderately for 30 minutes would burn 252 calories (i.e. Calorie Cost = 60 kg x 30 mins x 0.14 = 252).

And if you're not a water baby...

For non-swimmers, it is still possible to escape the summer heat and exercise in the water, with this pool workout routine. Most of these exercises can be performed in shallow water, so no special skills are required, except for a desire to dive into an inviting pool.

The benefits of water exercises are numerous. For one, the buoyant support of water cancels approximately 90 per cent of a person's body weight when they are submerged to the neck. Therefore, those who are overweight, pregnant, or who have joint problems will greatly benefit from the low-impact water exercises. The decreased impact on the joints increases joint mobility and enhances flexibility.

Also, water provides resistance without the use of equipment. In fact, water provides 12 to 14 times more resistance than land exercises,

and works opposing muscles in one movement as opposed to having to work each muscle separately as in land exercises. There are also many physiological benefits like increased circulation due to the pressure of the water, a reduced working heart rate and blood pressure, improved respiratory and metabolic rates, and improved cardiovascular and muscular endurance. In a nutshell, exercising in the water does a body good.

Aerobic Exercises

Depending on a person's goals and fitness level, aerobic exercises can be performed prior to or in conjunction with the strength and toning exercises. For beginners, it would be best to start with the aerobic exercises then finish with strength training. For those who are more conditioned, alternating between aerobic and strength exercises is a

great way to reduce boredom and gain strength and cardio endurance.

Swimming laps is always a great way to strengthen the heart, but for those that cannot swim, running in place is a great alternative. Run in place with maximum effort for 30 seconds, and then walk in place for 30 seconds. Walking the length of the pool and back is also a great aerobic workout since the change of direction causes you to go against the current that was just created. Jumping also gets the heart racing; simultaneously lift both knees up to the chest and lower back down.

Strength & Toning Exercises

Before beginning an exercise routine it is very important to warm-up and stretch for at least five minutes to prevent injuries. A proper cool-down and stretching for about 10 minutes should also be done at the end of the workout.

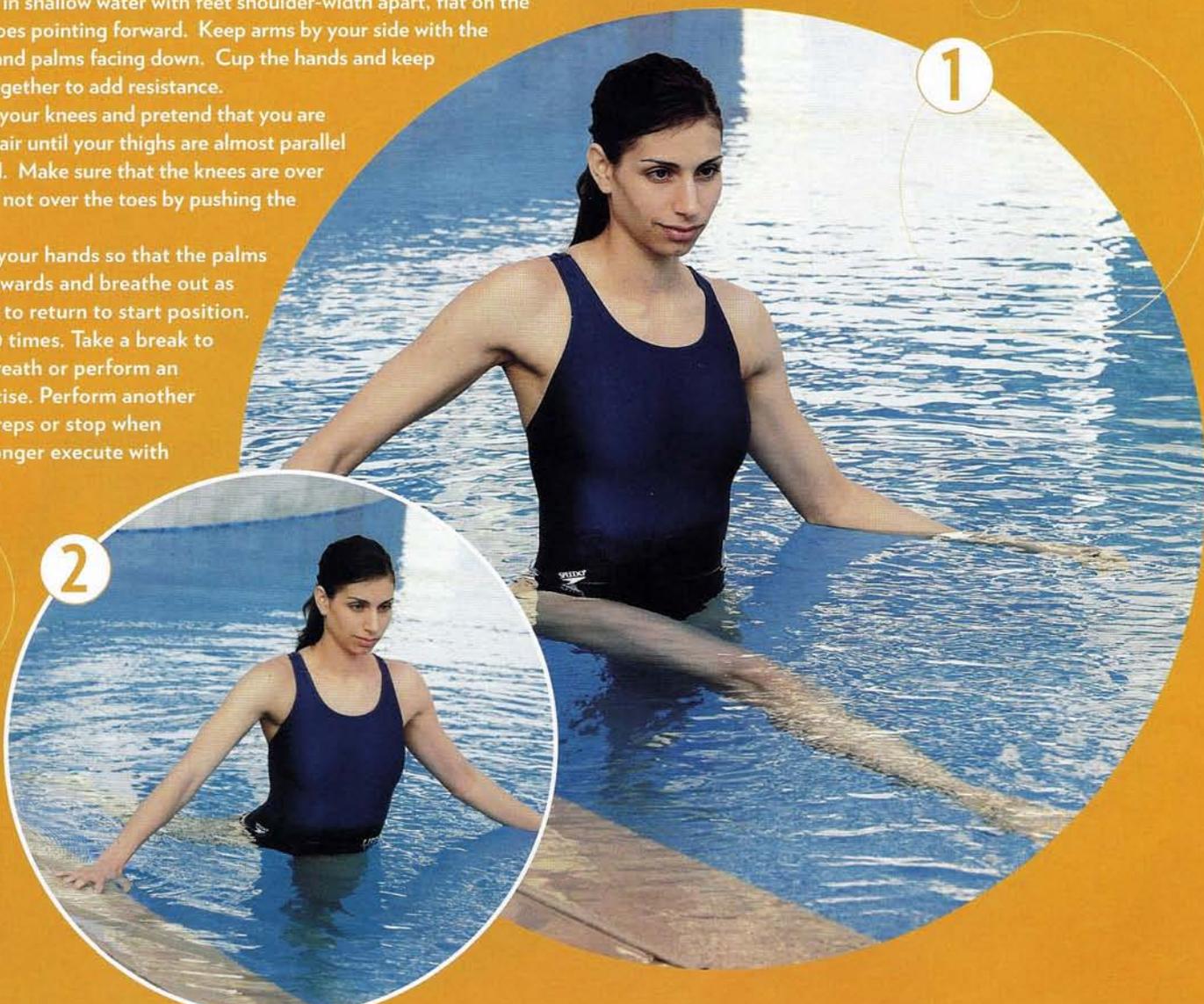
1. Water Squats

(targets thighs & buttocks)

Step 1: Stand in shallow water with feet shoulder-width apart, flat on the ground and toes pointing forward. Keep arms by your side with the elbows bent and palms facing down. Cup the hands and keep the fingers together to add resistance.

Step 2: Bend your knees and pretend that you are sitting in a chair until your thighs are almost parallel to the ground. Make sure that the knees are over the heels and not over the toes by pushing the hips back.

Step 3: Turn your hands so that the palms are facing upwards and breathe out as you stand up to return to start position. Repeat 10-20 times. Take a break to catch your breath or perform an aerobic exercise. Perform another set of 10-20 reps or stop when you can no longer execute with proper form.

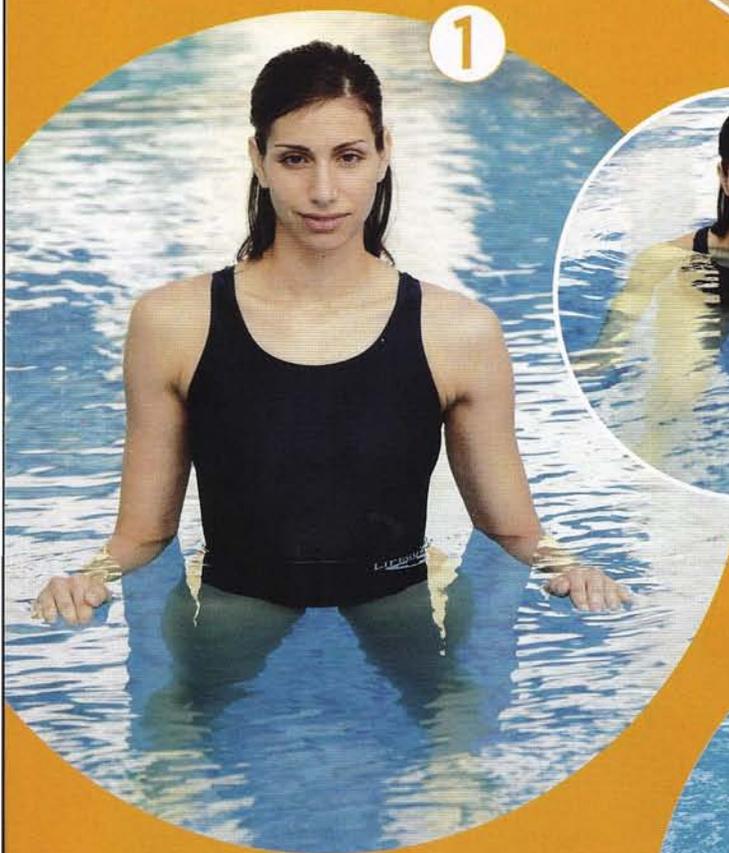
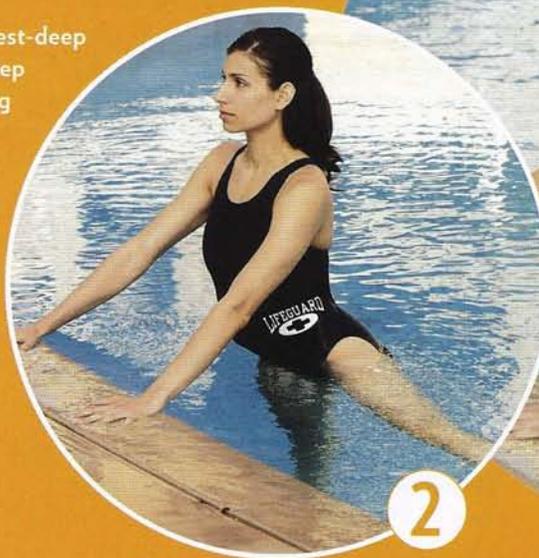


2. Inner/Outer Leg Lifts

(targets inner/outer hips & buttocks)

Step 1: Stand facing the wall of the pool in chest-deep water and hold on to the edge for balance. Keep both feet flat on the ground with toes pointing forward. Raise one leg to the side without bending the knee while squeezing the outer hip muscles. Make sure your back is straight and the hips remain forward.

Step 2: As you exhale, tighten the abdominals and return to start position by squeezing the inner thigh muscles without bending at the knee. Perform 2 sets of 10-20 repetitions. Repeat with other leg.



3. Front/Back Leg Lifts

(targets front/back thighs & buttocks)

Step 1: Stand sideways to the wall in chest-deep water and hold on to the edge of the pool for balance. Keep both feet flat on the ground with toes pointing forward. Raise the leg closest to the wall straight up without bending the knee. Make sure the hips remain forward. For extra resistance, point the toe forward as you raise the leg.

Step 2: Exhale and return to start position by pushing the leg back down without bending at the knee. Remember to tighten the abdominals to protect the back and avoid the hips from turning. Perform 2 sets of 10-20 repetitions. Turn around and repeat with the other leg.

4. White-Water Kicks

(targets legs, buttocks & abdominals)

Step 1: Rest your back against the wall of the pool and hold on to the edge with your elbows. Your body should be floating in the water at an angle. Slowly raise your body by squeezing the abdominals so that the toes are just below the surface of the water.

Step 2: In a scissor-like motion, quickly kick the legs; bend and extend the knees in an alternate fashion to create a big splash of white water. This exercise will surely get your heart racing, so remember to keep breathing. Kick for 15 to 30 seconds. Catch your breath and repeat once more.



5. Pull-Ups

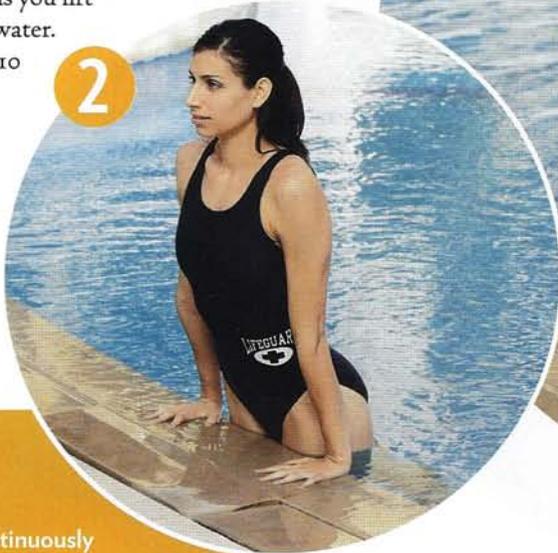
(targets arms, back & shoulders)

Step 1: Facing the wall in shoulder-deep water, place both hands on the deck of the pool with fingers pointing forward. Keep your body close to the wall of the pool.

Step 2: Pull yourself out of the water until your arms are straight and hips are against the edge of the pool. Always keep a slight bend in the elbows and you do not arch your back as you lift yourself out of the water.

Perform 2 sets of 5-10 repetitions.

Tip: For beginners, perform the same exercise in shallow water where the edge of the pool is below chest height.



Things to Remember:

1. The water is continuously cooling the body and it may feel as though you are not sweating. However, it is very important to always keep hydrated by drinking plenty of water before, during, and after your workouts.
2. Do not exercise on the balls of the feet. It is important to remember to use the toe-ball-heel pattern. Otherwise, when the heel fails to return to the ground, a shortening of the Achilles tendon can occur.
3. To increase the intensity of the workout, move faster, cup the hands and keep the fingers together, move more body parts at the same time, and exaggerate each movement.
4. Always protect your skin by applying sweat-proof and waterproof sun block that has a high SPF (Sun Protection Factor) 15 to 30 minutes before going outdoors. Working out early in the morning or late in the evening if proper pool lighting is available can also limit the amount of exposure to the harmful UV rays.
5. Remember to always consult with a physician before beginning an exercise program or suddenly increasing activity levels.

6. Lateral Raise & Chest Squeeze

(targets shoulders & chest)

Step 1: Stand in shoulder-deep water with feet apart, flat on the ground, and arms by your sides. Raise your arms to the sides until they are just below the surface of the water.

Step 2: Cup your hands, keeping the fingers together. Turn your arms so that the palms are facing forward. Exhale as you bring your palms together in front of your chest, then, bring your arms back so they are in line with the body and parallel to the ground.

Step 3: Turn your arms so that your palms face downwards. Push your arms down into the water to return to start position. Perform 2 sets of 10-20 repetitions.

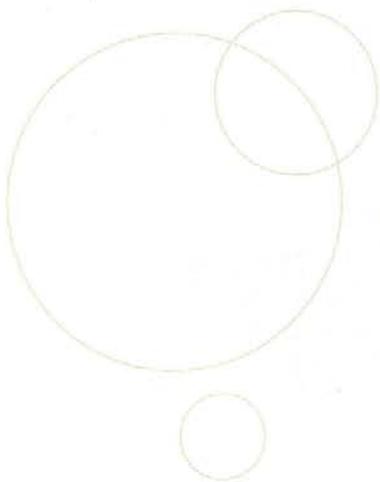


8. Torso Twists

(targets side stomach muscles)

Step 1: Stand in chest-deep water with both feet flat on the ground and shoulder-width apart. Bring both arms to one side of the body with the palms facing forward underneath the water. Arms should be almost parallel to the ground.

Step 2: As you exhale, contract the muscles of the stomach to keep the spine neutral, and drag the arms through the water to the opposite side. Turn arms so that your palms are facing forward again and repeat on the other side. Perform 2 sets of 10-20 repetitions.



1

2

3



7. Aqua Crunches

(targets stomach muscles)

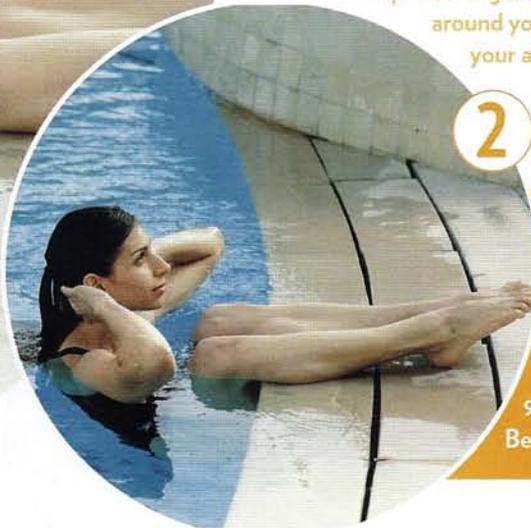
Step 1: Hang on to the edge of the pool with your legs and calves as support, as the rest of your body floats on water. Keep your knees bent and buttocks and hips close to the wall. Support your head by gently placing your hands behind the neck.

Step 2: Gently lift your upper body and shoulders towards your legs by squeezing the muscles of the stomach. Keep your chin off of your chest and make sure that you do not pull on your neck. Hold momentarily and lower to start position. Perform 2 sets of 10-20 repetitions.

Tip: For beginners, place a foam noodle around your back and underneath your arms for support.



1



2

For fitness advice or to begin your own personal fitness programme, please contact Bernadette on 050-283-2020/04-360-9805 or Bernadette@mailme.ae