

Facilitation of Ideal Movement Starts with A Stable Base....

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Beth is teaching Facilitating Ideal Movement for Multiple Populations at the Omaha NE ATRI Professional Development Days March 9 and 10.

Get in the water and movement will improve, right? When submerged the human body must learn to control rotational forces and upward thrust of buoyancy, overcome drag forces and orient to a different set of proprioceptive input. Additionally, after illness, injury, or disuse the body must re-learn sequencing, scaling and activation of muscles in order to achieve ideal movement patterns. The first step in this process, is to be anchored with a stable base from which to move.

The number one warm up exercise performed in the pool is walking. Falling through the water is a more accurate term when the client does not start with a stable base and sense of grounding. To gain benefits and carryover to land, walking in the water must be performed with ears, shoulders and hips aligned. Propulsion through the water relies on glute activation for hip extension during mid to terminal stance and stability to maintain balance during single limb support. Rushing, falling through the water is the common mistake made.

How to facilitate stability and connection with the pool floor...

1. Verbal cues:
“Feel your feet, where are you putting your weight?”
“Your weight should be equal side to side and front to back, with pressure across the ball of your and heel of the foot. Your arch slightly lifted”. Follow this with weight shifting in all directions to integrate sensation with return to ideal position.
2. Start with deep core muscle activation and rhythmic stabilization.
The therapist’s hands are great tools. Having the client standing in various stances positions (parallel, staggered, tandem, narrow, single leg etc.) the therapist using their hands at the pelvis first then moving to the shoulders, applies gentle to moderate pressure laterally, cuing the client to “match the resistance maintaining their position”. Alternating from right to left with gradual build up of resistance and slow release. Progress to pressing one hand in front and one in the back of the pelvis or shoulders, attempting to rotate the client, again with isometric muscle activation as the goal. Avoid breath holding or excessive pressure leading to incorrect muscle participation.
3. Slow movements down.
Moving slowly requires greater stability of deep stabilizing muscles and promotes balance.
4. Utilize the heavy concept.
Promoting proximal muscle activation without added external resistance.
5. Add tubing, manual or drag force resistance.
Increase the challenge as client develops stability and quality movement. Continue to correct compensations that may return with increased resistance.

Increase the effectiveness of your aquatic program by taking a few moments at the beginning of each session or new exercise to get your patient grounded.