



Photo by Morgan Pace

## Aqua Aerobics—Fun for All

By Angela Arnold

After five long months with a broken foot, I was eager to start exercising again. The problem was that my muscles were weak, and my joints unstable. I needed something with little to no impact that I would enjoy. That's when I found aqua aerobics. At first I thought it wouldn't be any more than swimming, but was I wrong. I found a whole new "gravity elimination" experience.

### What It Is?

Aqua aerobics is an effective low-impact, whole body workout. It involves using a flotation belt placed around the waist and styrofoam dumbbells. If done in deep water, there is no impact. The key to aqua aerobics is stabilizing the lumbar portion of the body by engaging the abdominal muscles, while performing a series of movements.

### Equipment

Aqua aerobics only requires three basic pieces of equipment—the aqua jogger, dumbbells and, of course, a swimsuit. The aqua jogger is the belt that fits around the waist and provides buoyancy so that deep water activities can be performed. These are available at both university pools but you can also purchase your own. The aqua jogger aids in the stabilization of the core of your body.

Dumbbells, which look similar to regular dumbbells only are made of styrofoam, can also

be used. They provide more resistance to give you an upper body workout. Like the aqua jogger, you can find the dumbbells at Gerlinger and Leighton pools here on campus.

### Who Benefits?

Anyone would benefit from aqua aerobics. It's low impact, and most importantly, it's fun. The benefits are even greater for individuals that have some injury to a joint or arthritis pain.

I spoke with Physical Therapist Carrie Jackson in the Sports Medicine/Physical Therapy department of the Health Center about using aqua aerobics as part of a physical therapy plan. She said that it is great for people with ankle or low back problems as well as for post fracture, strain, and tendonitis. Normally the patient would start in deep water since there is no impact and then gradually move to the shallow end of the pool so that there is some impact. Then land aerobics are integrated and the aqua aerobics is used to supplement until fully recovered from the injury. Typically a minor injury may take three to four weeks of aqua aerobics while a more serious one such as surgery or fractures could take a whole term of therapy. In my case, I fractured a bone in my foot, so I needed more extensive therapy. I am still recovering from my injury, and am transitioning to land activities. The aqua aerobics therapy has allowed me to begin physical activity again without fear of reinjuring my foot.

### Sample Exercises

A typical workout starts with a warm-up, such

as knee high jogging, with or without dumbbells. The major part of the workout consists of a series of different movements. These could include scooters, where you sit with your legs tucked under and propel yourself with your arms, or cross country skiing. Then there is the ab section. You can actually do sit-ups in the water. That surprised me the most. Not only can you do them, but also they are really effective. The end of the workout consists of stretching.

### Resources

Aqua aerobics is not only a great workout for those of all fitness levels, but it is also fun. I encourage you to take a class at the university or at a local pool. It is an alternative to the typical land workout and provides excellent benefits. If you have an injury and are interested in aqua as a physical therapy, you only have to see one of the practitioners at the Health Center, and then they can refer you to the Physical Therapy department.

You can check out information on aqua aerobics from:

- University Health Center's Physical Therapy Department 346-4401
- Sports Medicine and Wellness Center at the Student Recreation Center 346-4150
- Student Recreation Center 346-4113

## Loving Me

By Lindsey Harris

I was reading my "self-help" magazine the other day, and it wasn't all that helpful. I saw the culturally accepted view of the perfect body, and countless tips of how I could attain the same emaciated features on my own body. Headings like "Finally Flab-Free" and "Weight Loss in your 20's, 30's, and 40's" filled its pages. The self-help magazine actually left me feeling more helpless than enlightened. It made me think about my goals for what "healthy" should be, and the major one that stood out in my mind was self-acceptance.

America has painful body image issues, and everywhere we look there are more ads increasing our worries about our bodies. We all know our bodies are unique, and that health is not measured just through appearance. The human body is a miracle that runs like a magic machine. Why, then, the obsession with changing ourselves?

My best friend reminds me of a person with an ideal body image. She is not the skinniest person I have met, nor the largest. She eats a nutritious diet of food she enjoys, not just food

### Body Image Boosts

**Instead of comparing your body to that of your friends, or people on the television, think about all the great things you can do with your body. Other ideas to give your body image a boost are:**

- Look at yourself as a whole person, not just a collection of body parts.
- Wear clothes that are comfortable, so your body actually feels good.
- Do something nice for yourself, especially when you feel low (e.g. take a nap or a bath, find a nice place outside to relax)
- Make a top-ten list of things you like about yourself
- Stop using the mirror to find flaws

she feels are low fat. She loves her body, all of it, even her not so tiny stomach. I asked her why she doesn't obsess about what her body looks like, and her response to me was, "My body has done so many good things for me. How could I complain about little things that don't even change who I really am?" What she said has had lasting affects on how I view myself.

Taking steps to have a more positive body image can lead to a much happier and healthier life. If you believe a negative body image is getting in your way of optimal physical or emotional health, the University Health Center and Counseling Center provides services that can boost your self image. For nutritional advice there is the Nutritional Analysis Program, available in the Health Ed office, where your three day diet is compared to the RDAs. You can also schedule a meeting with Kristin Olmos, the Health Center's Registered Dietician, or take a visit to the lending library to pick up books like, *Making Peace with Food* by Susan Kano. For more information call the Peer Health Ed Office at 346-4456.

**Remember that your body is magic!**

## Factoids

- ✓ "The typical American now consumes approximately three hamburgers and four orders of french fries every week"  
—Fast Food Nation, Eric Schlosser, 2002
- ✓ 5,328 women in 1990 died as a result of homicide. 60 percent of these women were murdered by someone they knew, half of them by a spouse or intimate acquaintance.  
—Public Health Policy for Preventing Violence
- ✓ Factory farming began 20 years ago wiping out 300,000 family farms. Now, the U.S. meat industry thrives from just a few top companies.
- ✓ The beef industry is responsible for 85 percent of topsoil lost in the U.S.
- ✓ The average steer produces 47 pounds of manure every day.
- ✓ Raising animals for food requires more than 1/3 of all raw materials and fossil fuels used in the U.S.
- ✓ The U.S. produces enough grain and soybeans to cure the world of hunger; instead we cycle it through livestock.
- ✓ 1 acre of land can produce 165 pounds of beef or 20,000 pounds of potatoes.  
—John Robbins, Diet for a New America
- ✓ At least 45 percent of adults snore occasionally and 25 percent snore every night.  
—www.stopthesnoring.com
- ✓ Medical researchers say that a dose of laughter can exercise the muscles, nerves and organs of the torso. With a belly laugh sustained for an hour you could laugh away up to 500 calories.  
—Stress magazine
- ✓ The clitoris is the only organ designed solely for sexual pleasure.  
—Eve Ensler, The Vagina Monologues
- ✓ 18 million courses of antibiotics are prescribed for the common cold in the U.S. per year. Too bad colds are caused by viruses, which are unaffected by antibiotics.  
—Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- ✓ The bathroom medicine cabinet is one of the worst places to keep medicines. The heat and moisture of the bathroom are just the conditions required to alter medication chemistry, making them weaker and possibly ineffective, and in some cases, toxic. A cool dry area away from sunlight and children is optimal.  
—The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
- ✓ Between three and four million cases of cancer worldwide—375,000 in the United States alone—could be prevented annually through dietary change.  
—American Institute for Cancer Research and the World Cancer Research Fund
- ✓ Where to get 1200 mg calcium a day, as National Academy of Science Recommends:  
3 oz. Sardines 372 mg  
1 c skim milk 296 mg  
1 c yogurt 294 mg  
1 c cooked collards 289 mg  
4 oz tofu 258 mg  
1 c cooked turnip greens 252 mg  
1 c spinach 200 mg  
1 stalk broccoli 158 mg