

Wet, Wild, Workout!

FIT & FAB IN DOWNTOWN

By *Connie Cook* | Guest Columnist

There is a place where Speedos abound that is not creepy, gross or scary. As hard as that might be to imagine, given the bad rap the skin hugging swimsuits have garnered over the years, imagine Michael Phelps poolside in his weenie bikini. He's coaching you to tread water faster in an effort to raise your heart rate as you struggle to make it through your first Aqua Fit class. Suddenly, his Speedo becomes your personal motivator. It takes on a whole new perception and successfully raises your heart rate; and so do workouts in the water.

I recently participated in my first water workout in over 15 years and was amazed how it had changed. No more swaying to the music, riding water weenies up and down the pool and treading water with buoyancy belts on. What I experienced was way more challenging and much more fun than I imagined it would be.

Not one to work out alone, I asked our Aqua Fit instructor, Brooks Hollan, if he would teach my boot camp a private class one Saturday when we were scheduled to go to the park. When I told my boot camp we would be meeting poolside, they were a bit skeptical at first. They were used to running and jumping and climbing stairs and didn't think the pool workout would be that hard.

HA!

Twenty minutes into it, after jogging in the pool, treading water with our hands over our heads (with NO buoyancy belt to help keep us afloat), pushups on the side of the pool and plyometric jumps in the pool, we still had 40 minutes to go! So, like fish out of water, we continued our journey deeper into the water workout from hell. Laughing at ourselves and each other for even considering the workout wouldn't be "hard enough" for us, we moved onward like true boot camp soldiers and got our butts handed to us.

Most people who work out in the water will tell you some of the benefits of the workout include: very little impact to your joints (which is great news for those who may suffer from arthritis, a previous injury, or may just be a little clumsy on the land); the water itself provides resistance for your workout fifteen times greater than that of

air due to its natural viscosity, and a water workout can also be a great "recovery" workout for athletes who still need to train on their day off, but without any pounding on their joints. That being said, don't be fooled, this particular class was not a "kinder, gentler" workout.

So it came time to see how much we remembered from swimming lessons of years gone by. Brooks (who sports his own very hot speedo and looks very hot in it) divided us into teams and we had relays across the pool and back (luckily Fit's pool is more of a lounging pool than a true swimming pool, otherwise I would have sunk like a rock!). We all got our game on and kicked and crawled and butterflyed to the best of our abilities. As it turned out, some were much better swimmers than others. So my group (the not so great swimmers) secretly wished a few bathing suits from the other team would drop in the middle of our laps so we could at least have a fighting chance. But once Brooks brought out the kickboards, we redeemed ourselves.

Since any good workout session includes some great ab work, we knew there was more to come. Partnering up, one person was instructed to sit poolside and the other person was in the water. The person sitting poolside held the legs of



the other while the person in the water performed sit-ups from under the water, upside down against the wall. With all your might you power yourself up from below to the side of the pool, to almost a cool 180 degree sit-up. The water provided a lot of resistance and it turned out to be a very unique ab workout.

We ended the workout with grueling pool-side dive-bombers, 400 scissor kicks and 200 of some exercise lying on our bellies mimicking swimming motions.

That was killer move for our backs and shoulders. It was challenging, fun and exhilarating. All in all Brooks Aqua Fit class gave us a whole new respect for water workouts, swim training and of course speedos.



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