Hydrotherapy for your hips, knees and ankles

This leaflet gives you exercises for the hydrotherapy pool, as shown to you by your physiotherapist. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the physiotherapist caring for you.

Walking

Starting position
Hold a bat in each hand, with the face of the bat positioned as shown in picture 1.

Action
Walk forwards.

Progress
Increase the speed of the movement.

Use a float placed in front of the belly and with two flippers on as shown in picture 2.

Repeat
Clinician recommendation:
Single leg balancing

Starting position
Stand on one leg, away from the wall, with the other knee bent and foot off the floor.

Action
Maintain your balance for the time period indicated by your physiotherapist. Repeat on the other leg.

Progress
Do the same exercise, but pass a float around your body as shown in pictures 3 and 4.
Increase the speed you pass the float around your body.

Repeat
Clinician recommendation:

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Single leg balancing – more progressions

Starting position
Stand on one leg, away from the wall, with the other knee bent and foot off the floor. Hold a ball.

Action
Throw the ball in the air and catch it, while maintaining your balance on the standing leg.

Progress
Throw the ball a little bit higher.

Repeat
Clinician recommendation:
Squats with float

**Starting position**
Stand, holding on to the rail, and have a noodle float under one foot.

**Action**
Bend the knee and hip of the leg controlling the noodle float. The float will help with the movement. Push the float down to the floor of the pool.

**Progress**
Increase the speed of the movement.

**Use a larger float.**

**Move your feet closer together.**

**Repeat**
Clinician recommendation:

Noodle float push down

**Starting position**
Stand, holding on to the rail, and have a noodle float under one foot.

**Action**
Bend the knee and hip of the leg controlling the noodle float. The float will help with the movement. Push the float down to the floor of the pool.

Continued on the next page.
Leg lateral raise and pull in

Starting position
Standing side-on to the rail and hold it with one hand.

Action
Keeping the leg and knee straight, lift the leg furthest away from the wall. Lower the leg back to the starting position.

Progress
Increase the speed of the movement.

Adopt a side-lying position as shown in picture 5. Use ankle floats to work against. Move the bottom leg down towards the floor of the pool, and then let the leg come back up to the starting position.

Use two ankle floats around your ankle, instead of one.

Repeat
Clinician recommendation:

Progress
Increase the speed of the movement.

Do the exercise without holding on to the rail.

Use two noodle floats under one foot, instead of one.

Repeat
Clinician recommendation:
**Leg backwards thrust**

**Starting position**
Stand facing the wall and hold on to the rail with both hands.

**Action**
Keeping your knee and leg straight, push the leg backwards quickly, leading the movement with the heel. Do not allow movement in the low back area.

**Progress**
Increase the speed of the movement.

**Repeat**
Clinician recommendation:

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**Hip outward and inward rotation**

**Starting position**
Stand side-on to the wall, and a little way from it. Use ankle floats. Lift your thigh up to a roughly 90-degree angle to the body, keeping your lower leg straight down.

**Action**
Let the float lift your leg inwards. Return to the starting position. Let the float lift your leg outwards. Return to the starting position.

**Progress**
Increase the speed of the movement.

**Repeat**
Clinician recommendation:
**Leg scissoring**

**Starting position**
Position yourself in the corner of the pool with your arms holding onto the rails both sides. Place one or two noodle floats under your bottom.

**Action**
Make an opening and closing movement of the legs as shown in pictures 6 and 7.

**Progress**
Do the same exercise but without any noodle floats.

Increase the speed of the movement.

**Repeat**
Clinician recommendation:

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**Knee bend and straighten with float**

**Starting position**
Stand facing the wall, holding on to the rail with both hands. Place your feet hip-width apart. Place an ankle float around one ankle.

**Action**
Let the float help the bending motion of the knee, aiming to move the heel as close to your bottom as possible. Do not move from your hip or change the position of your thigh. Straighten the knee rapidly, returning the leg to the starting position.

Repeat with the other leg.

**Progress**
Do the same exercise but with two ankle floats (one above the other) on the same leg.

Increase the speed of the movement.

**Repeat**
Clinician recommendation:
Step ups and downs

Starting position
Stand facing the wall and hold on to the rail with both hands. Have an exercise step against the wall in front of you.

Action
Step up onto the step with one leg, and then the other leg. Step back down with the same leg that went up first.

Progress
Reduce the amount of hand support from the rail:
- fingers of both hands resting on the rail
- one hand holding onto the rail
- fingers of one hand resting on the rail
- no hands on the rail.

Increase the speed of the movement.

Do the same exercise on the steps leading into pool. Go straight from the floor of the pool to the second step, missing out the first step, and then back down again.

Repeat
Clinician recommendation:

Continued on next page

Lunges onto step

Starting position
Stand, hip-width apart, facing the wall and away from it.

Action
Lunge forwards onto the step in front of you, putting your hands on the rail to support you. Bring your leg back to the starting position. Repeat on the other leg.

Continued on next page
Side step up-and-over

Starting position
Put an exercise step away from the wall to allow space for you between the step and the wall. Stand side-on to the step.

Action
Step sideways up onto the step, and then back down off the step, into the space between the step and the wall. Repeat in the other direction to get back to the starting position.

Progress
Increase the speed of the movement.

Repeat
Clinician recommendation:

Progress
Increase the speed of the movement.

Repeat
Clinician recommendation:
Kicking with flippers

Starting position
Position yourself in the corner of the pool, holding on to the rails either side with your arms. Have flippers on your feet. Lift your feet up in front of you.

Action
Bend and straighten your knees, producing a kicking motion as you straighten. Perform with both legs at the same time, or alternating one side and then the other.

Progress
Increase the speed of the movement.

If available, use a longer flipper.

Repeat
Clinician recommendation:

Noodle float cycling

Starting position
Sit on 1, 2 or 3 noodle floats, depending on how many you need to float. Your feet should not touch the floor.

Action
Make a cycling motion with your legs, so that you travel forwards.

Continued on next page
Heel raises and lowers off the edge of a step

**Starting position**
Put an exercise step in the pool, against a wall with a rail. Stand on the edge of the step, with the front part of your foot on the step, and your heel off the step. Have your feet hip-width apart. Hold on to the rail.

**Action**
Rise up on to tip-toes as high as you can go, keeping your legs and knees straight. With your legs and knees still straight, lower your heels downwards as far as they will go.

**Progress**
Increase the speed of the movement.

Do the same exercise in a shallower section of the pool.

**Repeat**
Clinician recommendation:

Progress
Increase the speed of the movement.

Do the same exercise, with flippers on.

Repeat
Clinician recommendation:
Single leg heel raises and lowers off the edge of a step

**Starting position**
Place an exercise step in the pool, against a wall with a rail. Stand on the edge of the step, with the front part of one foot on the step, and heel off the step, and with the knee of the other leg bent. Hold on to the railing in front of you.

**Action**
Rise up on to tip-toes as high as you can go, keeping your leg and knee straight on the standing leg. With your leg and knee still straight, lower your heel downwards as far as it will go.

**Progress**
Increase the speed of the movement.

Do the same exercise in a shallower section of the pool.

**Repeat**
Clinician recommendation:

Foot and ankle upward and downward motion

**Starting position**
Position yourself in the corner of the pool, holding on to the rails with your arms either side. Have flippers on your feet. Lift your feet up in front of you.

**Action**
Alternately, move your feet and toes towards you (dorsiflexion), and then point them downwards (plantar flexion). You can do the movement with both feet at the same time.
Foot and ankle outward (eversion) and inward (inversion) motion

Starting position
Position yourself in the corner of the pool, holding on to the rails with your arms either side. Have flippers on your feet. Lift your feet up in front of you.

Action
Turn your feet outwards, and then turn them inwards.

Progress
Increase the speed of the movement.

Use longer flippers if available.

Repeat
Clinician recommendation:

Continued on next page
Tip-toe walking, heel walking, and lunge walking

Starting position
Stand at one end of the pool.

Action
Rise up onto tip-toes and walk to the other end of the pool and back (two lengths).

Then do two lengths walking on your heels.

Then do two lengths lunge-walking.

Progress
Increase the speed of the movement.

Do the same exercise in a different area of the pool where the water is either deeper or shallower (check with your physiotherapist).

Repeat
Clinician recommendation:

Contact us
If you have any questions about your hydrotherapy appointment, please contact the physiotherapy department where your appointment is booked, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm:
Guy’s Hospital, t: 020 7188 5104
St Thomas’ Hospital, t: 020 7188 5094 or t: 020 7188 5083

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit w: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

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