

Water workouts anywhere

By Brittany Lorimer, Community Contributor

Description: Water resistance allows you to use and receive resistance in all directions causing improved muscle tone and flexibility.

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Did you know that even in your pool you can still have a great workout? Water sports such as volleyball, polo, aerobics and walking are becoming a popular way to get active during the hot summer months. Specifically, water walking is becoming very popular, even high profile athletes are using it to cross train. Water walking is easy to learn, does not require swimming skills, is low-impact and keeps you cool while doing it.

Water resistance allows you to use and receive resistance in all directions causing improved muscle tone and flexibility; it is considered a cardio work out so it helps with heart health and endurance. By walking 2 miles per hour in thigh deep water you can burn as many calories as walking 3 miles per hour on land. Water walking does not have to be limited to the pool; it can be done in a lake or ocean. The sand at the bottom of an ocean or lake provides additional resistance causing you to burn more calories. Even if you are on vacation you can still keep up with an exercise routine.

How to get started?

Water walking is done in shallow water, waist to chest deep. You begin by walking forward, backward and sideways, using regular, short, or long steps. When walking forward, you step heel to toe and when walking backward step toe to heel. Walk an equal number of laps forward and backward. Make sure to include a warm up and a cool down with every routine.

So take a jump in the pool, lake, or ocean and get walking; anyone can do it! (Please consult your physician before starting any fitness routine).

After getting active by water walking, you now want to make sure you are eating healthy by including a variety of fruits and vegetables to your daily meals. I suggest you include this month's highlighted crop-squash.

Squash are categorized into summer or winter squash, depending on when they are harvested. Summer squash include yellow crookneck, pattypan and zucchini; they require little or no cooking. Winter squash consist of butternut, hubbard, buttercup, acorn, spaghetti and pumpkin; they are harvested at the end of summer and require a longer cooking time.

Squash are native to North America and in the Native American culture the term squash translates to "eaten raw." Squash are locally grown in Kern County and are a great addition to any meal. Summer squash can be grilled, baked, steamed, or eaten raw, but make sure to keep the skin on, that is where most of the fiber is. They are low in calories, a good source for vitamin C, magnesium and manganese.

Research has shown summer squash to offer cancer and cardiovascular preventative effects. So after a hard workout of water walking, make a light meal that has squash in it. Here is a recipe that is healthy, fun and easy for you to prepare at home.

Zucchini Boats

- 4 medium Zucchini
- 1 clove of minced garlic
- 1 egg
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 c finely chopped roasted red peppers
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 3/4 C bread crumbs
- 1/2 C diced tomatoes
- 1/2 C tomato sauce
- 1/4 C low fat mozzarella cheese
- 1/3 C finely chopped onion

Rinse zucchini thoroughly with water and remove ends. Steam the zucchini for 4 to 5 minutes or until tender but still bright green. Cut zucchini in half lengthwise and scoop out the insides leaving a 1/4-inch "zucchini boat." Set pulp aside.

In a bowl, mix together the egg, bell pepper, bread crumbs, tomato sauce, onion, garlic, salt, pepper and zucchini pulp. Spoon mixture into zucchini boats.

Place zucchini boats onto an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Top each with tomatoes and a sprinkle of low-fat mozzarella cheese and place back in the oven to melt.

Nutrition Facts: Makes four servings. Provides 167 calories, 22g Carbohydrate and 3g Fiber.

Brittany Lorimer is a registered dietitian. The healthy eating and active living articles will be published regularly and will feature locally grown crops.

This article was brought to you by Get Moving Kern, a community coalition that was developed to promote wellness of children and adults in Kern County by promoting healthy eating and active living. For more information, visit our website: www.getmovingkern.org