

Aquatic Physiotherapy with Hobbs Rehabilitation

What is Aquatic Physiotherapy?

Aquatic Physiotherapy is a form of physiotherapy that is designed for and based in water. A programme of treatment is designed using the properties of the water such as buoyancy and resistance allowing for a unique and personalised treatment approach. This is carried out in a hydrotherapy pool, which is an accessible pool where the water temperature is between 34-35°C. Winchester Leisure centre have a specially designed hydrotherapy pool which is fully accessible with a chair/bed hoist, ceiling track hoist and steps with a rail to enter the pool.

What are the benefits of Aquatic Physiotherapy?

- . Pain relief
- . Muscle spasm/ tone relief
- . Strengthening weak muscles
- . Improve circulation
- . Improve posture and balance
- . Develop confidence in the water
- . Relaxation
- . Work on functional tasks sooner than on land
- . Physiological effects can include – improved renal function, improved cardiovascular fitness, improved respiratory function and reduce oedema (swelling).

What will I need?

You will need to bring a swimming costume / shorts. You are welcome to wear a t-shirt over your swimsuit if you would feel more comfortable. Please also bring your own towel and shower gel / shampoo. You may wish to bring a dressing gown or extra towels with you to keep yourself warm before and after your session. Please note that no outdoor shoes can be worn around the pool side therefore you may wish to bring indoor shoes / flip flops. Over shoes will be provided.

Please note that elbow crutches and walking sticks cannot be used around the pool side – frames will be provided for those who require support.

What happens when I get there?

Aim to arrive with enough time to change prior to your session.

You will be directed to the changing area.

Please ensure you use over shoes / indoor only shoes / remove your shoes prior to entering the pool side.

If you are a wheelchair user, wheels will need to be wiped prior to entry to the poolside.

Please ensure that you use the toilet prior to entering the pool.

Your therapist will meet you when you exit the changing room – please note they may already be in the pool.

Please shower prior to entering the pool to reduce risk of contamination – shower chairs will be available for wheelchair users if required.

Where can I get changed?

The Hydrotherapy pool has two unisex accessible changing rooms – ceiling track hoists are available from these changing areas – weight limit 160Kg.

There are additional male and female changing rooms with 4 cubicles each.

Please note that accessible changing areas are limited therefore if you require longer to get changed (more than 15 minutes) please talk to your therapist.

Please ensure you bring all your belongings out of the changing rooms with you or make use of the lockers available as they will be being used by the next patient while you are in the pool.

Do I need to be able to swim?

You do not need to know how to swim, a therapist will be with you at all times if you are unable to be independent in the pool. If you are feeling anxious about being in the water, please inform your therapist and they will take every step to reassure you. There will be a range of flotation devices which your therapist may use to keep you comfortable and to assist with your therapy programme.

If you feel unwell at all during your time in or around the pool, inform your therapist immediately.

How do I get in/out of the pool?

The pool has an accessible chair/bed hoist, if you require hoisting from your wheelchair please bring your own hoist sling (your therapist will check that this is compatible with the pool hoist prior to your appointment). A member of staff from the leisure centre will assist with the transfer into the pool.

There are steps with two hand rails available also if you wish to / are able to enter the pool this way.

Are there any reasons that I may not be able to access Aquatic Physiotherapy?

These are absolute contraindications to Aquatic Physiotherapy:

- Acute vomiting or diarrhoea
- Medical instability following an acute episode such as CVA, DVT, or Status Asthmaticus – if in doubt please check with your consultant
- Proven chlorine / bromine allergy
- Resting angina
- Shortness of breath at rest
- Uncontrolled cardiac failure / paroxysmal nocturnal dyspnoea
- Weight in excess of the evacuation equipment limit of the pool – 160Kg

These are precautions when deciding is Aquatic Physiotherapy is right for you; these will be discussed with your therapist:

- Acute systemic illness / high temperature
- Irradiated skin due to radiotherapy. Irradiated skin will be more sensitive to heat and wounds will heal more slowly. Also be aware that chlorine can cause a skin irritation
- Known aneurysm
- Open infected wounds – please refer to your local infection control policies
- Poorly controlled epilepsy
- Unstable diabetes – we ask that you bring a snack and a drink that can be kept pool side
- Oxygen dependency – exercising in water increases oxygen consumption

What are the side effects?

The effects of the warm water can often make you feel tired after a session – ensure you bring a light snack and a drink to have after the session and rehydrate. It is likely that you will feel you need to empty your bladder after your session which is why we recommend going to the toilet prior to entry to the pool.

What is the water temperature?

The pool temperature is maintained at 34-35°C

I am incontinent.

Bladder incontinence

Catheter / convene - all bags should be emptied prior to entering the pool and straps should be attached securely to the leg underneath swim wear. Please leave valves open so urine can flow freely into the catheter bag during the session.

Bowel Incontinence

Unmanaged bowel management is a contraindication to Aquatic Physiotherapy and therefore if you are unable to manage your bowels for longer than 2 hours we cannot allow access to the pool.

A managed bowel routine is fully appropriate as sessions can be based around your established routine.

There are options for incontinence wear for water based activities.

I have an open wound

If the wound can be covered with a waterproof dressing that will not fall off then you may be able to access the pool. However if the wound needs to remain dry and cannot be dressed then it is recommended that you do not enter the pool as this can impact on wound healing.

Please feel free to contact Hobbs rehabilitation if you have any further questions or concerns regarding Aquatic Physiotherapy and attending a Hydrotherapy pool.