

## HOW TO GET STARTED

### About Aquatic Exercise

Research on individuals with multiple sclerosis suggests that aquatic exercise is effective for improving flexibility and range of motion, cardiovascular endurance, fatigue level, muscle strength, mobility function (including gait and balance), quality of life, and psychological wellbeing. Whether you are interested in a high-level aerobic workout, moderate cardio/strength training, or gentle, slow-moving form, aquatic exercise can be adapted to all levels of physical abilities.

### Getting Started

To help guide you in starting your own aquatic exercise program, MSAA created a brief checklist of points to consider before dipping your toes in the water. We call it ...

### *MSAA's Count Down to Splash Down!*

- 1. Talk to your physician** and/or physical therapist about your health history, current MS condition and your ability to exercise through water-based activities.
- 2. Work with your healthcare team** to develop a personal, aquatic exercise plan that sets realistic goals based on what you want to achieve (i.e., improve balance, increase strength, etc.) with reasonable timetables.
- 3. Locate a pool facility that works for you** (i.e., convenience, appropriate classes, qualified instructors, accessibility, costs, etc.). MSAA will be happy to assist you in your search for a facility that meets your needs.
- 4. Speak up and feel comfortable talking** with the aquatics trainer or instructor about your MS and healthcare needs before starting your exercise program/class as well as during the sessions.
- 5. Have FUN!!!** The key to exercising is to have fun. A fun exercise session keeps you smiling, keeps you motivated, and keeps you healthy.



### Finding Resources

The Multiple Sclerosis Association of America (MSAA) is working to develop a national listing of pool facilities, community-based aquatic exercise classes and fitness instructors familiar with MS and the needs of the MS population. Information will be continuously updated on our SwimForMS.org website. We also encourage you to call our toll-free Helpline at **(800) 532-7667** and speak to one of our Client Service Consultants.