



## **Aquatic Therapy for Back and knee pain during Pregnancy**

Aquatic therapy uses the unique physical properties of warm water to promote healing and improve function. Aquatic therapy has been proven helpful for patients with chronic pain and a multitude of orthopedic conditions. As joint stress decreases in the water, the patient's ability to move and exercises becomes easier and less painful.

One in four women has at least temporarily disabling symptoms of some type during pregnancy. Soft tissue swelling, weight gain and ligamentous laxity can cause discomfort in joints. Water's buoyancy helps support the patient's weight which effectively decreases stress on their joints. The viscosity of water creates enough resistance to provide a true therapeutic experience. Water resistance promotes muscle strengthening without added weights. The gentle resistance and buoyancy promote muscle strength without joint stress. Which for pregnant women gives aquatic therapy clear advantages over land-based programs.

Hydrostatic pressure also decreases swelling and improves body position awareness and balance. This is important for helping to decrease the patient's risk for falls and accidental injury. Aquatic therapy provides safe exercise, and may help reduce leg swelling

Aquatic therapy is an AMA-recognized therapeutic procedure designed to improve function. Aquatic therapy patients are supervised during the session and adhere to the Standards & Guidelines of the Aquatic Exercise Association.

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Exercise in general, has generally been shown to be associated with stress reduction, reduced depression, anger and anxiety. Physiologic stress is augmented during pregnancy. The placenta produces corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH) beginning in the second trimester and again in the last two to four weeks of pregnancy. Stress can affect the fetus and has been shown to be associated with low birth weight, earlier gestational age of delivery and preterm birth. Exercise in pregnancy may provide benefit to the fetus.

Our aquatic therapy program specifically addresses musculoskeletal conditions during pregnancy. Including but not limited to:

Lower back pain and Sacroiliac pain  
Meralgia paresthetica of femoral nerve  
Patellofemoral dysfunction

We offer an individualized program tailored to women during pregnancy. The women will take part in a shallow water program with a pool depth ranging from 3.5 to 4.5 feet. Pool temperature will be maintained at approximately 85 degrees specifically for this program.

Each session consists of: 10-15 minutes of warm up, 15-20 minutes of low impact exercise, 10-15 minutes of stretching and includes periods of rest with 6 second heart rate checks and fluid replacement.

Referrals require a physician prescription with any restrictions and associated medical conditions and insurance authorization.

Contraindications – Diabetes, Hypertension, History of miscarriage, Bleeding, Preterm labor, Intrauterine growth retardation, Incompetent cervix, Placenta previa, Premature rupture of membranes.