

AQUATIC THERAPY

1. Review the precautions and contraindications before applying aquatic therapy to ensure that its use is safe for this patient at this time.
2. Explain the modality to the patient so that he or she will know what to expect from the application of aquatic therapy.
3. Review the goals of aquatic therapy with the patient before entering the pool environment. Ask whether the patient has any questions or fears. Determine whether the patient can swim.
4. Advise the patient that he or she will be required to provide a bathing suit and will be showering before entering the pool. The patient also will be responsible for getting dressed after the aquatic therapy session and should come prepared with towels and a hair dryer. If assistance is needed to dress or undress or to otherwise prepare for the aquatic environment, these details should be worked out before the treatment session.
5. Assemble any flotation devices you will use with the patient during the aquatic therapy session so they are readily available and accessible.
6. Some clinicians prefer to wear wet suits in addition to a bathing suit for aquatic therapy sessions with patients. Decide this in advance, and have a wet suit available if you wish to use one.
7. Develop a plan to transfer the patient into the pool. This will be based on the facilities that are available, the needs of the patient, and the goals of the treatment session.
8. Monitor and record the patient's vital signs.
9. Help the patient transfer into the pool as needed.
10. Implement the treatment plan with the patient in the pool.
11. Monitor the patient's response to the aquatic environment throughout the treatment time. Some patients fatigue quickly in a buoyant environment; others chill quickly. Constant feedback from patients is critical for patient safety.
12. When the treatment session concludes, assist the patient as needed in transferring out of the water. Monitor his or her post-treatment vital signs
13. Assist the patient in drying off with towels and returning to the changing area as needed.
14. Document the treatment session time and activities performed, indicating those that were buoyancy assisted or buoyancy resisted. It is also useful to record patient responses to the session and post-treatment vital signs.