

# Aquatic Physical Therapy

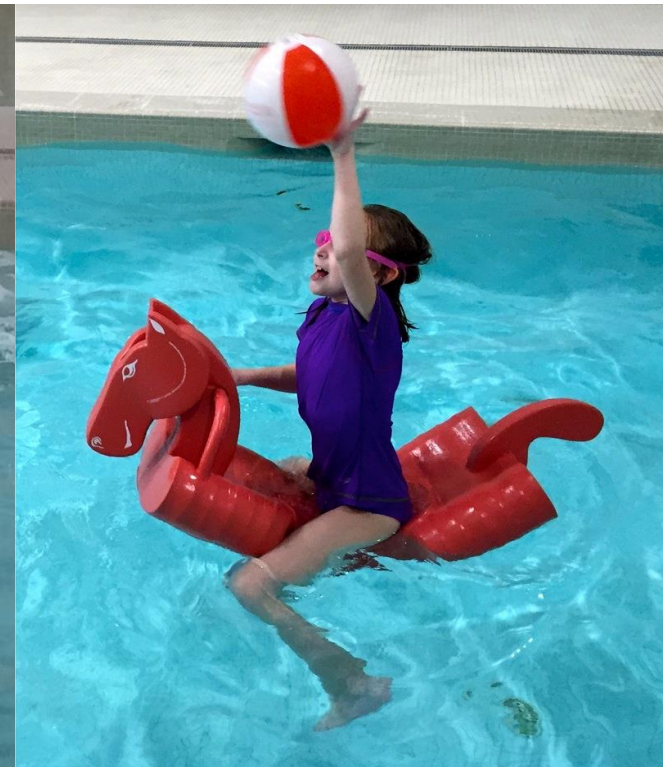
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# Aquatic Physical Therapy

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Therapeutic Activities, Water Safety and Adapted Swimming Instruction



# Begin with an evaluation on land and identify problems and goals

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- Impaired mobility – walking, running, hopping, and jumping
- Weakness arms, legs, and core
- Limited ability to perform bimanual, reciprocal, and symmetrical activities
- Difficulty with transfers - climbing, floor to stand
- Decreased breath control, respiration, and speech
- Challenges with coordination and motor control
- Impaired balance
- Increased tone, muscle spasm
- Decreased range of motion

# Functional training in the water with carry over to land-based activities

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## **Water safety skills:**

- Breath control, floating front and back and recovery from same, rolling over, changing directions.

## **Upper extremity strengthening and coordination with bimanual and asymmetrical activities:**

- ball skills, racquet, hand paddles, rings, grasp, hand buoys, therapy bar, retrieve toys

## **Lower extremity strengthening, mobility, and balance:**

- Fins, kicking all positions, jumping, hopping, skipping, static balance, all performed at variable depths

## **Decreased range of motion and increased tone:**

- Neutral warmth of 90 degree pool, stretching, reaching



# Burt Therapeutic Skills & Adapted Swim through the years

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Burt started at 2.75 years, at 4 years he transitioned to community swimming lessons.

Burt 3 yrs, racquet, swim with fins, rings

Burt 4 yrs, jump and swim to wall



# Nate Therapeutic Skills & Adapted Swim through the years

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Nate started at 3 years.

Nate 5 years

Nate 8 years, ready for swim team!





# Chloe Therapeutic Skills & Adapted Swim through the years

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Chloe started at 18 months.

At age of 8, joined a swim team and received the coaches award!

Chloe 5 years

Chloe 8 years, on a swim team!



# Amaia Therapeutic Skills & Adapted Swim through the years

Amaia started at 4.5 years.

Life-long sport with individual and team components, strengthens her entire body, including her heart and lungs

Age 5 swam laps

Age 10 she won a kids' triathlon (Paralympic division age group)

Age 11 she trains with Paralympic swimmers

Hopes to join HS swim team!

[Amaia 5 years](#)





# Advantages of aquatic PT

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- Train a child's whole body
- Perform bimanual and reciprocal activities
- Warm water reduces tone and helps stretch muscles
- Develop lifelong leisure activity
- Have fun
- Develop social skills
- Improve self-esteem and self-confidence
- Children often excel in the water, beyond peers and siblings
- Water safety



# How can you expect your child to progress ?

## What do you look for in an aquatic professional?

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- Start children as early as 6 months - teach parents how to work with children, parent in water.
- At about 3 years, some children can swim, roll to back for safety, hold onto side, climb out of pool.
- At 4-5 years, some children can be water safe.
- At 7-9 years, some children are able to join a swim team.
- Find aquatic professionals who are PT/OT/SLP and with experience in recreational aquatics - teaching swimming, OR experienced swimming instructors.
- **Resource for pools, adapted swimming, and aquatic therapy:**
- Franciscan Children's Hospital – Adaptive Sports and Active Recreation Resource Guide