

Allegro means "fast and lively". In Aqua Allegro, the focus is on stamina and strength using movements similar to what can be found in an allegro section of a typical ballet class. Using interval training and choreography combinations to music, the body is challenged to perform familiar aqua fitness movements with a twist.

**Course Objectives:**

- Increase understanding of ballet theory and how it can be applied to aquatic fitness
- Learn new ways to add an element of cardio and high intensity training with a ballet twist
- Learn a series of interval combinations to add to your classes
- Understand how to demonstrate ballet influenced moves safely and effectively from deck

**Introduction**

Ballet influenced and Barre themed classes are all the rage right now. They are popping up all over boutique studios and big box gyms. They have also made their way into the pool in the form of Barre focused classes, a combination of ballet and Pilates, and many other variations.

It is not uncommon to hear about achieving a “dancer’s body” and for good reason, this is a very motivating method to get into these classes. However, these formats are not always conducive for every type of participant and population. Let’s bring it to the pool to give them a taste of the dancer’s way, without sacrificing their well-being.

**Background**

Ballet – A genre of dance - *noun*

1. an artistic dance form performed to music using precise and highly formalized set steps and gestures.

Your typical ballet class, whether you take class in London, Russia, or the USA, consists of series of class segments as described below:

**Barre:** A series of exercises done at the barre to get the body ready for the work that will take place in the duration of the class. The stability of the barre to support and assist the dancer allows them to effectively warm up and prepare the body for the complicated steps that happen in the center.

**Centre:** Still getting the body ready and warm for the more challenging steps, exercises like the Port de Bras (movement of the arms) Centre Practice & Turns, and Adage (which means drawn out and lengthened) are typically danced next.

**Allegro:** By our title today, we know this means “Fast & Lively”. Typically, one would dance some Petit Allegro Exercises (meaning small jumps) like Sautés, Changements and Soubresauts

in various combinations (to name a few). Next can be called the Medium Allegro or simply Allegro, which would consist of slightly larger movements, including Glissades, Sissones, and Assemblés. Finally, would be the Grande Allegro, typically taking place from the corner of the room and travelling across the studio by dancing larger jumps and leaps including Saut de Chat, Grande Jetés, and Fouette Sautés.

**Reverence:** Slow gentle movements to lower the heart rate and thank the accompanist and the teacher for the class.

### **Aqua Allegro – The Class**

In an Aqua Allegro Class, we take the movements from the Allegro section and plug them into our already loved and familiar interval training segments.

in-ter-val train-ing

*noun*

1. training in which an athlete alternates between two activities, typically requiring different rates of speed, degrees of effort, etc.

For our purposes today, we will be combining the higher intensity movements from the Allegro sections of class, with recovery segments from the Port De Bras and Adage sections of class to create an interval training type class plan.

### **Rotation Rotation Rotation!**

A large part of what makes Classical Ballet different from other forms of dance genres, is the extensive use of external rotation of the legs. When ballet moved from being performed in the royal courts to a proscenium stage (meaning where the audience views the performance from only one side) it required the dancers to execute more lateral movement, which led to using some degree of turnout. Overtime, this external rotation became the aesthetic of classical ballet and dancers today will strive to work in 180-degree turnout. Attempting to achieve 180-degree turnout is not ideal for most people.

Turnout must come from the hip. As we know, the hip joint has the ability to move in all three planes of motion (Sagittal, Frontal & Transverse) and has the ability to perform hip Flexion, Extension, Hyperextension, Abduction, Adduction, Transverse Abduction, Transverse Adduction, Internal Rotation, External Rotation, and Circumduction. Many dancers who do not have the natural ability to externally rotate to the desirable 180 degrees will try and force their turnout from their knees down. This can cause a plethora of issues for the rest of the body. What is preferred, in my opinion, is that the dancers work with their natural degree of turnout has, rather than forcing the body to do something it was not meant to do.

### **Why is all that important?**

Too often I see participants in Barre/Ballet classes doing movements that are not ideal for their bodies in their current state. In this session, we will look at how to build up to a degree of external rotation for our participants in a safe and effective way. Many of the movements can

be done in parallel, and I strongly recommend giving the movements in parallel when introducing these combinations to your classes.

### **Benefits of working in external rotation**

We live in a 360-degree world and do not solely operate in the sagittal plane. The pool is a fantastic place work in external rotation, especially for us normal humans and not extensively trained ballerinas and danseurs. In the water, we are supported and assisted. The water also provides balanced resistance unlike in terra firma.

Being that we typically don't exercise in this manner, it allows for a unique (and fun!) way to work different areas of our body. It will also allow our students to target different areas of the body that may not normally be utilized by executing isometric muscle contractions to achieve "burn out" or muscular fatigue. We focus on improving core strength in abdomen and low back, while developing stabilizing muscles of the shoulder and hip areas.

### **Contraindications**

As all our classes, it is important to provide options for our participants. Check with your class if there are any injuries you need to be aware of. While this class is accessible for most populations, if someone suffers from severe hip and/or shoulder pain, they need to utilize the modifications given (which we will go over at the pool). When in doubt, have them clear it with their doctor first.

### **Goals of class**

- Improved Muscular Endurance
- Improved Cardio Endurance
- Improved Core Strength & Stability
- Improved Range of Motion & Flexibility
- Improved Posture & Mind-Body Connection

### **Now to the class content!**

#### References:

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