

## Upper body – joint mobility and strength

These water-based exercises are recommended by Arthritis NZ to help with a variety of conditions.

It shouldn't hurt to do these exercises but it's OK to feel the joints and muscles work.

See your GP or physiotherapist if your pain or movement gets worse from doing these exercises.

Tell the pool staff and see your GP if you feel unwell while doing these exercises.

Repeat movements in sets of 10 to 15 repetitions.

If the exercise uses one limb at a time, do a full set on that side before changing to the other limb.

If you want to improve joint mobility, you can use the **easier** form. To increase muscle strength, you can use the **harder** form.

### Shoulder flexion/extension

- Stand with feet hip width apart and hands at sides.
- Turn hands so thumbs point toward hips.
- Raise one arm forwards and the other arm backwards.

**EASIER:** 1. Turn hands so thumbs point forward. 2. Place a float around the wrist to assist movement. 3. Move arms in one direction at a time.

**HARDER:** 1. Squat more deeply in the water. 2. Place paddles on your hands. 3. Move faster.



### Shoulder abduction

- Stand with feet hip width apart and hands at sides.
- Raise arms out to side keeping thumb pointed forwards.
- Return arm to side.

**EASIER:** 1. Turn hands so thumbs point forward. 2. Place a float around the wrist to assist movement. 3. Move arms in one direction at a time.

**HARDER:** 1. Squat more deeply in the water. 2. Place paddles on your hands. 3. Move faster.

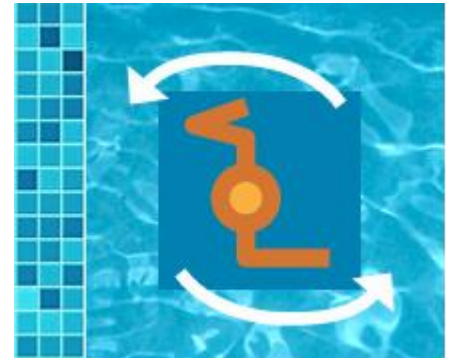


### Surface push/pulls

- Stand with feet hip width apart.
- Push one arm forward on water surface while pulling the other arm backwards.
- Swap arms.

**EASIER:** 1. Place floats around wrists to support hands on water surface.

**HARDER:** 1. Place paddles on hands. 2. Move faster. 3. Hold a flutter board upright in both hands and move both arms at the same time.



### Trunk rotation

- Stand with feet hip width apart.
- Lift arms out to side with hands on water surface
- Twist shoulders to face one way, then the other
- Rotate head in opposite direction to exercise the neck

**EASIER:** Place floats under hands to support arms

**HARDER:** 1. Place hands just below the surface and push against water as twisting. 2. Place paddles on hands. 3. Move faster.



*Adapted with permission from Darlow B, Perry M, Chapple C (2013) Water based exercise for people with arthritis. University of Otago and Arthritis New Zealand. This manual was produced as part of a joint project between Arthritis New Zealand and the School of Physiotherapy, University of Otago. Further information and advice about managing arthritis is available free by calling an arthritis educator 0800-663-463 or visiting [www.arthritis.org.nz](http://www.arthritis.org.nz). Page created September 2019.*