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In this live workout filmed at MANIA®, Melissa Layne, MEd takes you through a workout that will get participants moving throughout the entire pool. Aqua kickboxing doesn't have to mean standing in one place and throwing repetitive jabs and stationary kicks. How about some combinations to move you through the water and up the calorie burn? Front, side, back, diagonal and even in a circle. It's past time to take your kickboxing out of the box and into the entire pool!

Aqua kickboxing is a great workout that provides the benefits of traditional aqua exercise with high-intensity movements to improve a person's core strength and muscular endurance. Aquatic kickboxing involves a wide variety of upper body movements from jabs to hooks to uppercuts. Aqua kickboxing also helps with balance, flexibility, de-stressing, and improving mental abilities.

Aqua kickboxing is based on principals from martial arts. In martial arts, you focus on aligning your breathing with movements to improve results. The force behind the power comes from the mind, not the muscle. Martial arts help improve the two regions of the brain involved with motion, the cerebellum and the primary motor cortex.

Studies have shown that martial arts can also help the brain order and arrange incoming information into patterns. This phenomenon is known as the kinesthetic loop. When a movement occurs, nerves in muscles signal to the brain information about what is going on in the body. The brain processes this information and orders it into patterns. Performing martial arts exercises helps the brain process, interpret, order, compare, and respond to patterns.

Aqua instructors have to be careful of possible injuries to the rotator cuff during exercise. Muscles within the rotator cuff are the most injured muscle in group fitness. Muscles within the rotator cuff include the supraspinatus, infraspinatus, teres minor, and the subscapularis. These muscles can be torn or stressed during jabs or other aqua kickboxing movements that require stress on rotator cuff muscles.

Aqua instructors also need to use proper music to succeed and retain clients. Music should be between 130 and 140 beats per minute. Music should create strength and a feeling of power in participants. Music should allow participants to move at their own pace. Love songs are not suitable for an aqua kickboxing routine!

Participants must also work out at a proper water depth to minimize the impact on their body. The water should come up to the middle of a participant's chest to minimize injury risk and maximize the benefits of the workout.

Basic aqua kickboxing movements include jabs, crosses, hooks, uppercuts, blocks, jump ropes, push kicks, and roundhouse kicks. Combining basic choreography movements can create a successful routine that is high intensity and low impact.

Melissa's first combo begins with 8 runs and 8 front jabs. These movements are moderate-intensity and help participants warm up to the routine. Anaerobic movements occur later in the workout after participants are warmed up and moving in the pool. Melissa recommends that the power for a jab should come from the upper back, and not the arms. Using full range of motion of the upper back creates power and reduces risk of injury.

Melissa's aqua kickboxing routine involves runs, jumping jacks, and anaerobic movements. Instructors should use high powered movements for participants to cross the EPOC threshold. High intensity exercises create an oxygen deficit. Excess oxygen is required to return your body to return to a normal level of metabolic function. EPOC allows participants to burn calories for up to 24 hours after an exercise.

Cooling down is important for participants to minimize soreness. Common muscle groups that should be stretched out after aqua kickboxing are hip flexors, quadriceps, and obliques.

Melissa gives tips for instructors to improve their water choreography. She recommends that successful water choreography should move participants throughout the pool. Successful routines should utilize the water principles of turbulence, inertia, viscosity, and acceleration to engage participants with the routine. Instructors should not teach aquatic exercise as a drill-like class! Aquatic exercise should be low impact, high intensity, and engaging with the instructor and everyone in the pool.

Melissa's routine allows participants of all levels to succeed with the routine. An aqua kickboxing routine should include rebounding, neutral, anchored/grounded, and suspended movements. Rebounding movements involve syncopated kicks. Neutral movements involve any punch/block combination with locomotion. Anchored/grounded movements involve any punch/block non-locomotor combination. Suspended movements are core endurance movements; speed bags are a great example of a suspended movement.

Melissa recommends to add insertions to an aqua routine to engage participants. Insertions are high-intensity movements that cross the anaerobic threshold and create an EPOC. Insertions help participants work on their mind-body focus. Insertions also move participants arms out of the water, which is beneficial for a person's muscular endurance training.

If you would like to watch Melissa Layne's Aquatic Kickboxing live workout, you can access her routine and more at [www.SCWFIT.com/OnDemand](http://www.SCWFIT.com/OnDemand). If you want to attend a live workout by Melissa or hundreds of other exercise physiologists, find a MANIA® convention near you at <http://scwfit.com/mania/>. Improve your aqua routines with Melissa Layne's high-intensity workout that will move you out of the box and into the entire pool!

Melissa is a Kinesiology Department faculty member at the University of North Georgia. She has 30 years of experience and a Master's degree in Exercise Physiology. She taught elementary PE and coordinated fitness programs for Royal Caribbean, Home Depot and orthopedic surgeons. Melissa is the author of WATER EXERCISE (Human Kinetics 2015), a member of the educational faculty and a DVD presenter for SCW. She is well versed at taking complicated material and breaking it down into easily understood pieces.