

# ***Lesson 2***

# ***Balance Exercises***

# Otter Rolls

- Start by rolling from front to back, or back to front while floating with your pool noodle under your arms.
- When you can do both directions do a complete 360 degree roll over
- Both ways

Otter rolls address core stability to help stop you from tipping over.



# Otter Rolls

Otter rolls tone your core muscles. By learning to roll you can stop yourself from rolling as well. You can start by rolling from back to front or front to back while floating with your pool noodle under your arms. When you can do both, then do a complete 360 degree roll over.

Work towards being level with the surface of water.

Roll one way a few times and then the other, changing your active muscles.

# Bicycle – Slow, Horizontal



- Floating with pool noodle under arms
- Lay on side and pedal like you're on a bicycle. Nice big leg movements.
- Try and stay horizontal
- 30 seconds each way

# Bicycle – Slow, Horizontal

This is a forward pedalling bicycle even though your head will be travelling backwards. Work towards having your body as horizontal as you can while staying spinally aligned and not getting your head under water. Start slowly, concentrating on the spinal alignment, but you will also find that you tend to tip forward or backwards. Staying aligned with your spine in both planes will contribute to better balance, through increased core stability. This exercise can also be done quickly as a warm up and hamstring exercise.

# Diamond Toe Drawing



- Floating with noodle under arms.
- Put the soles of your feet together and pull feet up under your seat forming a diamond shape.
- Pretend you are holding a pen between your feet pointed at the ground.
- Draw a circle, a square, write your name.
- Remember to go both ways.

# Diamond Toe Drawing

While floating with a noodle under your arms, put the soles of your feet together and pull your feet up under your seat, forming a diamond shape with your legs.

Notice as I bring my feet under my seat, I start to lean back, this is common with a tight Psoas muscle.

While in the water, imagine you are holding a pen between your feet pointed at the ground.

While keeping your upper body steady, can you draw a circle? Notice at what point your upper body shifts. If it's too easy, draw a square and write your name?

Remember to do 30 seconds each way.

You can also work on your Psoas muscles laying on your back on land and allowing your knees to drop towards the floor, but don't let your back arch.

# Chair Seat



- Sit on your noodle like a chair.
- Keep your body upright using your hands as needed for balance.
- Focal Point
- Breathing.
- See how still you can get.



# Chair Seat

Carefully sit on your noodle like a chair. In the beginning you will need to use your hands for balance, especially if the water is moving. As your core muscles begin to stabilize you better, do less with your arms. It helps to have a focal point at eye level and to think about steady rhythmic breathing. The same as when you ride. See how still you can get

# Horse Seat

- Sit astride your noodle
- Balance
- Paddle your way to shallower water



# Horse Seat

Move from Chair seat to Horse seat without touching bottom if you can. Careful, it's harder than it looks. You'll notice Vicky's noodle is misbehaving. Any lack of symmetry you have will become apparent. Do you tend to collapse one way? Your noodle may not be as forgiving as your horse. Spend at least 45 seconds on your balance and then paddle your way to shallower water.

# Single Knee Lifts



- Stand on one foot
- Put noodle under other foot.
- Lift knee towards surface and push down again
- Repeat 30 seconds with each leg
- If too unbalance hold noodle at surface of water for support and just raise and lower your knee.

# Single Knee Lifts

In this exercise, you stand on one foot, in waist deep water, and lift your other knee up and down. If you find it difficult with the noodle under your foot then just hold your noodle on the surface of the water for support, while you raise and lower your knee. You'll see I'm coming to the surface and no hands while Vicky uses some arms to balance and doesn't come quite as high. It is better to work on being correct, and gradually increase the difficulty.

Make sure you do not lean forward and do not straighten your leg. Lift your knee as high as you can, while still maintaining your balance. Deeper water is harder with the noodle under your foot.

Repeat for 30 seconds with each leg

# Wax On, Wax Off



- Bend your supporting leg and draw circles on the floor with the noodle under one foot.
- Do 15 seconds each way with each leg for 1 minute total time.

# Wax On, Wax Off

The name is from the movie, the Karate Kid, where he spends a day waxing cars, instead of learning Karate, only to find, he has learned some Karate. I recommend watching it.

So start by putting your pool noodle under one foot. Bend your supporting leg while keeping your upper body upright. I am leaning forward in the video. Choose a focal point at or above eye level to help avoid this. Draw small circles both clockwise and counter clockwise with each leg.

Gradually make the circles bigger but only as your balance allows.

# Compass Points



- Standing on left foot with noodle under right foot and straight leg.
- Lift foot towards North, put it down.
- Lift towards East, put it down.
- Repeat 30 seconds then switch legs.
- Lift left leg towards North and down, then west and down.
- Don't lift any higher than you can balance



# Compass Points

Standing on your right foot with the noodle under your left foot, and a straight leg, lift your left foot towards the North and put it down again. You may want to repeat this part a few times, before you lift it towards the West, and put it down. Try and stay vertical.

Repeat this for 15 seconds in each direction and then switch legs. Lift your right leg towards the North and down, then to the East and down. Don't lift it any higher than you can balance.

In the ocean we were faced with two challenges. The ground was very soft and shifting under our feet and the water was cold. Normally waist deep water would offer more support.

As your balance improves you can alternate to the front, down, to the side, down for the 30 seconds as we're doing in the pool, and then switch legs. We added in South towards the end but it's a little tricky. If you find this too difficult, you can do this using the noodle for support instead of under your foot. If it's too easy, lift higher and go deeper.

# Arm Circles, One foot



- Stand on one foot with other off the ground
- Circle arms in front, then overhead, then sides, 5 seconds each position.
- Circle arms the other direction, overhead, then sides, then in front,
- Change legs. Repeat circles but change the direction

# Arm Circles, One foot

Stand on one foot, with your other foot off the ground. Circle your arms out in front of you, then overhead, then out to the sides, for 5 seconds in each position. Work on keeping your upper body aligned. As your arms go out to the sides, allow your shoulders to drop down and back. Check that you are still breathing fully. Circle your arms the other direction, out to the sides, then overhead, and then out in front of you. Change legs and repeat all the arm movements.

When you're ready for more of a challenge, you can put the pool noodle under your raised foot.

If you forget which order to go, just keep moving for 30 seconds each side.

# Otter Rolls – As A Stretch



- I hope you like otter rolls as much as I do!
- You are in shallower water now so try and stay close to the surface as you roll.
- Allow your spine to bend like a willow.
- Feel and allow a stretch of your spine throughout the roll.

# Otter Rolls – As A Stretch

Otter rolls, as an exercise, are done with an aligned spine, using subtle core movements to turn you in the water as I'm doing at the beginning of the video while Vicky does them more as a stretch.

As a stretch otter rolls are done with a supple spine that bends evenly throughout its length allowing a nice relaxation to happen. Now if we could just get our horses to do this...

# Froggy



- Another fun one that works the whole body.
- In waist deep water put both feet on pool noodle and hop across pool using your hands as needed.
- Have a race with a friend or just laugh at yourself.

# Froggy

And just for fun, and balance, and cardio, Here's Froggy. You'll have to decide whether or not this is low impact for **your** body but I find most horseback riders are okay with it.

Put both feet on the noodle and hop forward, using your arms for balance and also propulsion. Have a race with a friend or just see how fast you can go, with out falling off.