



## Water based exercise and your child/young person

### Why exercise in water?

- 💧 It's fun, enjoyable, relaxing and can promote a feeling of well-being.
- 💧 Water can help to support the body, but also provide some resistance to movement which helps to strengthen muscles as you move in the water.
- 💧 Moving in the water allows improvements in balance and postural tone, and can help to improve body alignment.
- 💧 Water can help with smoothing out jerky movements and improving co-ordination.
- 💧 It can help with improving body sensation and awareness.
- 💧 Water can help reduce oedema (swelling) and improve circulation.
- 💧 It can relieve pain and muscle spasms.
- 💧 It is possible to improve cardiovascular fitness and endurance (exercise tolerance) when exercising in water.
- 💧 Functional abilities can be encouraged.
- 💧 Sometimes movements that are difficult on land can be achieved in water.
- 💧 To interact with family and/or friends on the same level.
- 💧 It can help increase compliance with strategies to manage physical presentation, by providing variation to usual land-based exercises.

### Is water based exercise safe for my child/young person?

It is recommended that you discuss any queries related to your child/young person's health needs and water-based exercise, with your GP or paediatrician before commencing.

It is also important to monitor your child/young person's fatigue levels after exercising in water, and to pace the sessions - ensure to start off with short time periods, so that excessive soreness or fatigue is not felt.

Your child/young person may need 1:1 support in the water.

### Will the pool temperature be ok?

Many children cope well in normal swimming pool temperatures, but should be closely observed and if they are getting cold they should get out of the water even if the session is not quite finished.

If your child doesn't move a lot, and will mainly be using the pool for relaxation, floating, and enjoying other features the pool may have such as bubbles, then it could be useful to look for a pool with a warmer temperature - this could be a leisure centre's teaching pool as these are often warmer than their main pools, or it could be a more specialist pool such as a hydrotherapy pool.

Warmer temperatures can also help reduce muscle tone, and if your child has high tone, this can be helpful for relaxing the muscles, and allowing easier or less painful movement.

### **What about swimming lessons?**

Swimming lessons are fantastic for teaching water confidence, water safety and learning to swim. Many swim instructors can adjust the swimming lesson to meet your child's needs. Some pools offer specific disability swimming lessons, or offer 1:1 swimming lessons that can be targeted to your individual child's needs.

For some children and young people, they may prefer a less structured time in the water.

Other ways to exercise in the water include:

- 💧 Carrying out a water-based exercise programme set by your physiotherapist. We can come with you to the pool as a one-off appointment and set up a programme of suitable activities for you to do with your family, carers or sometimes with education staff as part of a differentiated PE session.
- 💧 Accessing a swimming pool's sensory sessions, family swims or leisure/open sessions. Your physiotherapist may be able to help show you how to handle your child/young person in the water, if you need this.
- 💧 If your child is younger, parent and toddler groups can be fun to join.

### **Will there be suitable changing facilities?**

Many pools have accessible changing areas. Some pools have hoists in the changing areas, and hoist access into the pools. The pool staff will be able to show you what they have if you arrange to visit first, so you can check their facilities are suitable for your CYP.

### **What if my child/young person is incontinent?**

There are swim nappies that can be worn. If your child is catheterised or requires bowel washouts, this should be done at an appropriate time interval before entering the water. The pool may have specific requirements for nappies/swim wear that should be worn.

### **What if my child/young person is fearful of water?**

They may still enjoy water based exercise, but will need to work on water confidence in their early sessions.

### **How do I find a suitable pool?**

It is useful to contact the pool and discuss your child/young person's needs. Some pool environments can have lots of different sensory stimuli. It could also be useful to visit the pool, and see if you and your child/young person are comfortable with the facilities before booking your first session.

### **Pool options in Derby City**



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[www.derbyshirehealthcareft.nhs.uk](http://www.derbyshirehealthcareft.nhs.uk)



Hydrotherapy pool, Spondon (fully accessible) [Aquathlete Ltd | Scheduling and Booking Website \(simplybook.it\)](#)

Leisure and teaching pools, Derby (fully accessible) [Moorways Sports Village and Water Park | Gym & swim | Everyone Active](#)

Swim school, Stenson, Derby [Sarah Bates School of Swimming \(sbsos.co.uk\)](#)

Swim school, Derby [4Strokes Swimming Academy](#)

Hydrotherapy Pool, Littleover (fully accessible) [Ivy house School - Hydrotherapy Pool](#)

17metre pool, Littleover [Gayton Swimming Pool \(gaytonpool.org.uk\)](#)

20metre pool, Allestree [Allestree Woodlands School Sports and Facility Bookings Allestree Woodlands School](#)

### **Pool options in the Derbyshire County area**

Leisure and teaching pools, Matlock (fully accessible) [SEND Sessions | Freedom Leisure \(freedom-leisure.co.uk\)](#)

Hydrotherapy pool, Sutton-in-Ashfield [Happy Splash – Swim School](#)

Leisure and teaching pools, Ilkeson (accessible) [Facilities - Victoria Park Leisure Centre | LeisureCentre.com](#)

25metre pool, Ashbourne [Swimming | Ashbourne Leisure Centre | Freedom Leisure \(freedom-leisure.co.uk\)](#)

Main and teaching pool, Alfreton (accessible) [Swimming | Alfreton Leisure Centre – Places Leisure](#)

Main and teaching pool, Long Eaton [Swimming - West Park Leisure Centre | LeisureCentre.com](#)

Hydrotherapy pool, Alfreton [Hydrotherapy Pool - Alfreton Park School - Community Special School](#)

Small warm pool, Wirksworth [About Us | Wirksworth Swimming Pool](#)

25metre pool, Belper (accessible) <https://www.belperleisurecentre.co.uk/>

Main pool, splash pool and teaching pool (accessible) [Discover Bramcote Leisure Centre - lleisure](#)

### **How does my physiotherapist provide support?**



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If your child/young person is swimming with school, school may ask for advice from the physiotherapist. If needed the physiotherapist will show school staff handling, and some suitable exercises, as a one-off appointment.

If you are taking your child/young person to swimming lessons, and the instructor would like some more information about the child/young person's physical needs we can liaise with them, if you make the introductions.

If you are taking your child/young person in the pool yourself and would like some advice regarding handling them in the water, or an exercise programme to do, then please contact your physiotherapist. If you arrange a one-off session in the pool at a time convenient to yourselves and the physiotherapist, then they can show you a programme of suitable activities to work on with your child/young person, and show you how to support them in the water.

Contact our service if you have any queries on 0300 123 4586 press 2 then option 5.

### **What if we don't think swimming is for us?**

Don't worry. There are other ways for your child/young person to be engaging in exercise and sports suitable for them.

We have some links on our website: [Exercise and sports :: Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust \(derbyshirehealthcareft.nhs.uk\)](https://www.derbyshirehealthcareft.nhs.uk/exercise-and-sports)

But you could also see the options available in the Derby City local offer or the Derbyshire County local offer:

[Synergy - Enquiry \(derby.gov.uk\)](https://www.derby.gov.uk/synergy-enquiry)

[Leisure and activities - Derbyshire Local Offer](https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure-activities)



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