



# Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center PHYSICAL THERAPY DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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## Aquatic Therapy Program

**Policy No.:** 421  
**Revised:** April 2022  
**Supersedes:** December 2018  
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Rancho Aquatic Therapy Program is a therapy program delivered within the Don Knabe Wellness and Aquatic Center. The services offered by this program are skilled physical therapy interventions in the aquatic environment for both inpatients and outpatients of Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center. The Physical Therapy staff initiate use of the aquatic modality/environment for appropriate patients in the plan of care to achieve the patients' therapy goals.

### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- To improve circulation
- To increase respiration
- To decrease muscle tone/tension
- To decrease pain
- To increase range of motion
- To increase balance
- To increase trunk stability/control
- To increase functional mobility
- To increase perceptual/spatial benefits
- To increase morale
- To increase cardiovascular and aerobic exercise
- To explore new healthy leisurely activity

### INDICATIONS

Patients with a variety of impairments may be appropriate for aquatic therapy. Primary therapist or Aquatic therapist will evaluate and determine if the pool is a beneficial and appropriate treatment modality for the patient.

### Appropriate patients for Aquatic PT:

1. Impaired gait
2. Impaired balance
3. Postural dysfunction
4. Motor control deficits
5. Restricted range of motion

6. Restricted weight bearing
7. Edema
8. Pain
9. Hypertonicity
10. Cardiovascular dysfunction
11. Pulmonary dysfunction
12. Tissue healing (closed wounds)
13. Sensory integration dysfunction
14. Stress management difficulty

## **CONTRAINDICATIONS**

1. Open wounds or wounds with sutures/staples that are not fully healed/closed
2. Colostomy bag
3. Foley catheter
4. PICC line and intravenous line
5. Tracheostomy
6. Bowel or bladder incontinence, diarrhea within 2 weeks, vomiting within 24 hours
7. Any isolation precautions and communicable diseases (for example: Hepatitis A, Cryptosporidium)
8. Febrile conditions
9. Menstruation without internal protection
10. Infectious or unidentifiable skin rashes or any active infection
11. Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) without anticoagulant
12. Acute traumatic brain injury (TBI) or Stroke (less than 4 weeks since onset)
13. Acute myocardial infarction (MI), less than 6 weeks since onset
14. Acute/sub 1 acute myocarditis (less than 6 months)
15. Severe congestive heart failure CHF/cardiomyopathy/ejection fraction less than 15
16. Uncontrolled seizures
17. Lightning storm with Flash-to-Bang ratio 30 sec or lower (even indoor pools)
18. Active infectious condition – viral, bacterial, etc.

## **PRECAUTIONS**

1. Skin: rashes (eczema, psoriasis) and Athletes foot (wear aqua shoes), sensitivity to pool chemical
2. MRSA (nares only)
3. Metabolic: dialysis, renal dysfunction, diabetes, pregnancy, heat sensitivity (Multiple Sclerosis)
4. Pulmonary: Pulmonary disease (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease {COPD}, asthma, bronchitis, emphysema, cystic fibrosis), Use of supplemental O<sub>2</sub>, infants

5. Cardiovascular: controlled hypertension (HTN), DVT, orthostatic hypotension, cardiomyopathy, myocarditis, MI (greater than 6 weeks)
6. Sensory/Vestibular: frequent ear infection, vestibular dysfunction, poor sensation/proprioception (wear shoes), hearing impaired, glasses/contacts
7. Neurological: seizures with no recent activity, TBI, CVA, autonomic dysreflexia, hypotonia
8. Behavioral/Cognitive: fear of water, combative, impulsive, dementia, cognitive impairment
9. Orthopedic: maintain WB/ROM precautions, osteoporosis (increased potential for harm with fall)



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