

## Aging Population

By **Connie Warasila and Ann Gilbert**

By the year 2030, the number of individuals 65 years and older will reach 70 million in the USA alone. In addition, those 85 and older will then be the fastest growing segment of our population. The time is now to prepare for the health, functional capacity, quality of life and independence in this incredibly important population. We need to do this as a facility, to adjust and accommodate ourselves to this population and as health and fitness professionals we need to be able to service this population.

Since most exercise programs are not designed to address the specific needs of those 65 years and older WATERinMOTION® Platinum was created. What makes WATERinMOTION® Platinum unique from WATERinMOTION® Original is that it:

- Uses slower music more intergenerational music
- Has longer repetitions
- Has 8 tracks and 1 bonus track instead of 10 and 1 bonus track
- Focuses more on balance
- Incorporates more cognitive challenges because as the body ages so does the mind
- Focuses more on fast twitch muscle fibers because as we age those muscle fibers deteriorate at a much faster rate than our slow twitch fibers
- Focuses more on activities of daily living (ADLs) to make the lives of our participants easier on a daily basis

### The three M's (A, B, C)

When teaching WATERinMOTION® Platinum there is a certain “finesse” that all instructors must have to be successful. Each WATERinMOTION® track is broken up into 3 segments: verse (V), chorus (C), and bridge (B) and then repeated 3 times (A, B, C). This makes it easier not only for your participants to learn but for the instructor to teach. Once you have learned V-C-B, you simply have to repeat it. However, in each segment the instructor must focus on a different emphasis of cueing, these are the 3 M's.

### The three M's are:

1. Move
2. Muscle
3. Motivate

What this means is that during your first segment (V1, C1, B1) you simply want to show and tell your participants how to do the movements. During your second segment (V2-C2-B2) you want to continue showing and telling your participants how to do the movements, but you also want to show and tell your participants what muscles they should be using, how they should be using them, and what they should be feeling. During your third segment (V3-C3-B3), you take it all home. At this point your participants will know what movement is coming, how to do it, and how they should be feeling. So, this is your chance to shine. Motivate your participants to up the intensity, add in their own flare, and really give it all they've got.

## Longer Repetitions

There are 3 reasons we do longer reps in WATERinMOTION® Platinum:

Adaptable:

We want to make sure that our program is comfortable for our participants and that we move at a slower pace. This can be done by doing an 8 count instead of a 4 count or a 16 count instead of an 8.

Achievable:

Developed a future without fear because the participants know they can achieve this class.

Accomplished:

The participants want to feel accomplished; which will give them a higher sense of self-esteem and success.

Another reason that we move slower in WATERinMOTION® Platinum is that the participants will need more time to get in the water, out of the water, to show particular movement patterns, or to address their specific needs.

## Music

We want to make sure that the music that we use focuses on the 50's, 60's, 70's, and 80's. So, that the songs are recognizable to the participants in the class. WATERinMOTION® Platinum uses hits of the time of our populations; which is proven to help retain them in class.

Also, instead of working at 140bpm, as in WATERinMOTION® Original, we are working at 130bpm. This gives our participants more time to get a wider range of motion, get the moves down, and even further reduce impact.

## Balance Challenge

Because the participants are in water and the buoyancy of the water is supporting their joints, participants can practice balance movements that they may not feel comfortable doing on land. Because they are less fearful we can push our participants harder than if we did the same movements on land.

## **AREAS OF FOCUS IN WATERinMOTION® PLATINUM**

### **Manual Dexterity**

As we age, we begin to lose the manual dexterity or ability to move our hands. The Arthritis Foundation states that aging populations should do exercises with their hands to reverse or decrease these effects and WATERinMOTION® Platinum integrates these exercises into the choreography to do just that.

### **Application of flexibility**

It's very important for us to focus on the application of flexibility as well. As we age we lose the ability to plantar and dorsi flex our foot. This is why as we age we shuffle and are more prone to falls.

### **Crossing the Mid-line**

We must focus on not crossing the mid line when teaching or crossing the legs over. We do this because some people have less flexibility in the hip girdle or have had hip surgeries and we want to ensure that we stick to the Arthritis Foundation guidelines. People can cross if they feel comfortable but we must show them a proper example.

We must also ensure that we strengthen the adductors of the inner thigh because those muscles strengthen the knee joint to help with balance.

### **Shoulder Girdle**

We must focus in our flexibility track to impress upon our participants the importance of retracting the head back, scapular retraction and depression; which will avoid the "rounded back" that we get as we age.

### **Challenge the body and the mind**

Be aware that because your class will have different age groups, all with different cognitive levels, that you must challenge the group as a whole. This is one of the most important reasons to change the choreography quarterly because it provides both the physical and cognitive challenges needed to keep the body improving.

## **Cueing**

We also need to be aware of how to cue to this population. Verbally, we are going to simplify our cueing by talking slower, enunciating, and being consistent. We also have to preview early and verbally cue sooner to help our participants follow the transitions easier. Because some of our instructors will be older, when visually cueing, it is important to demonstrate each movement while standing and while seated.

## **Fast Twitch Focus**

Since we lose more fast twitch muscle fibers as we age we want to focus on maintaining these by using more explosive movements, when applicable. And we want to focus on retaining our slow twitch fibers in our cardio sections.

## **Activities of Daily Living (ADLS)**

It's important for our older adults and deconditioned populations to feel a sense of independence, strength, power and control. As instructors we must focus on stimulating our participants minds, giving them the ability to socialize and give them a sense of well-being and belonging.

# Educational Installment Platinum 1: Review Quiz

1. What will be the fastest growing segment of our population by year 2030?
  - a. Ages 55 and older
  - b. Ages 65 and older
  - c. Ages 75 and older
  - d. Ages 85 and older
2. WATERinMOTION® Platinum has \_\_\_ tracks and \_\_\_ bonus track(s).
  - a. 10, 1
  - b. 8, 1
  - c. 5, 3
  - d. 6, 4
3. What should you emphasize when cueing in your second segment "Muscle"?
  - a. What muscles your participants should be using and how they should feel
  - b. What muscles are in the body and how to use them
  - c. What your participants muscles are made out of
  - d. Why your participants muscles hurt after exercise
4. As we age, we begin to \_\_\_ the manual dexterity of our hands.
  - a. Gain
  - b. Forget about
  - c. Lose
  - d. Strengthen
5. Instead of working at 140bpm, for the cardio section of WATERinMOTION® Platinum we work at \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. 130bpm
  - b. 100bpm
  - c. 15bpm
  - d. 125bpm
6. Why do we shuffle our feet as we get older?
  - a. We become lazier
  - b. Because of a lack of strength
  - c. Most people have sustained an injury
  - d. We have a reduced ability to dorsi and plantar flex
7. What muscle fiber types do we lose faster as we age?
  - a. Slow twitch
  - b. Fast twitch
  - c. Medium twitch
  - d. Compound
8. We focus on \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ to avoid the "rounded back" that we get as we age. The 5 strategies to progress in life and avoid a burnout are self-evaluation, continuing education, be a visionary, rest, and balance.
  - a. Retracting the head back, scapular retraction, depression
  - b. Relaxing the core muscles, looking forward, not leaning forward
  - c. Strengthening our hamstrings, increasing our flexibility in our back, looking forward
  - d. Standing upright, proper bending techniques, not hunching
9. When verbally cueing for the WATERinMOTION® Platinum population you must \_\_\_?
  - a. Simplify your cueing by talking slower
  - b. Talk with your hands
  - c. Yell at the participants
  - d. Use lots of complicated terminology
10. The time is \_\_\_ to prepare for the health, functional capacity, quality of life and independence in this incredibly important population.
  - a. Coming
  - b. Starting
  - c. Now
  - d. Soon

Answers: 1. D; 2. B; 3. A; 4. C; 5. A; 6. D; 7. B; 8. A; 9. A; 10. C