

Boot Camp Best Practices

By Connie Warasila

Bootcamp formats have been very popular in the fitness-class setting for a while now. A variety of class formats have been designed to take advantage of the benefits of the boot camp format. Many exercisers are drawn to this format because of its' simplicity and intensity. The movements introduced are typically easy to master, as far as alignment and execution. This simplicity allows for quick mastery of the movements and in turn, allows for increased intensity.

Bootcamp formats often include the following characteristics:

- Simple movement patterns
- HIIT (30 second, high-intensity, interval training)
- Stations
- Simple equipment
- Coaching

Simple movement patterns: Movements that are simple enough to master quickly are ideal for a boot camp format. Avoid extensive use of rhythm variations, low repetitions, or multiple-move patterns. Establish the base move quickly and add intensity by coaching the following progressions:

- bigger movements (increased range of motion - ROM)
- stronger muscular engagement creating more turbulence
- travel and directional changes
- accelerated rebound
- level changes
- speed

HIIT (30 seconds): Boot camp style workouts are often organized into short segments of drills, anywhere between 30-60 second intervals. These short bursts afford sufficient time to build intensity with a simple move, then you move to the next drill. WATERinMOTION music is designed in 30-32 second blocks, so it is easy to time the movement changes. The "Chorus" block, highlighted in the choreography notes as yellow, offers the highest intensity, compared to the other blocks. The cardio-intensive tracks include a "double-chorus block" at the end of each track that increases the time for that drill to about 60 seconds. Take advantage of this double block to coach your students to their full-intensity potential. Use the other blocks for more moderately intense movement for cardiovascular recovery.

Stations: In a typical boot-camp class, the moves are sometimes arranged in a circuit, station format. Exercisers move from one station to the next at a pre-determined, timed interval. In this boot-camp inspired WATERinMOTION release, we will not use stations, but we will change from move to move at pre-determined, timed intervals. The moves are relatively simple and class participants should be able to master each move quickly.

Simple equipment: Using the tools readily available makes transitions smooth and efficient. The water is the main tool used for WATERinMOTION, and it is readily available, at all times, during the class. The challenge for instructors is how to best motivate clients to use the resistance of the water. Coaching clients to “push the water harder” is sometimes not enough. An enthusiastic approach is often more successful, along with motivational verbal and visual cues. Refer to the water as the resistance tool, just like buoys or paddles. WATERinMOTION traditionally uses the aqua noodle as a tool for buoyancy and resistance. Prepare for quick, noodle access before class begins by pre-setting the noodles along the side of the pool so they can be accessed efficiently.

Coaching: Your communication style is very important in a boot-style class. You need to be strong, but respectful. Informative, but accepting of variations. Encouraging, but understanding about personal limitations. Here are some helpful coaching hints:

- Project your voice, yet avoid yelling or high-pitched screaming
- Keep verbal cues to a few syllables at a time
- Remind students the purpose in every move
- Rely on your physical, visual, non-verbal cues to do most of the communication
- Move with your class at all times
- Use the music for timing the intervals

You will not need to watch a clock for the timed intervals because the music is already designed into about 30 second blocks. Because boot-camp style classes are simple in movement, you will need to create focus and interest by coaching the 3Ms (Move, Muscle, Motivation). Refer back to the WATERinMOTION On-line Certification, Segment 3 on the 3Ms or WATERinMOTION Release 24 Educational Article.

This release will be dispatched In September. That means that you may encounter students who have been away for the summer and are returning to a regular schedule. This format will help those clients get back into the groove of water fitness. The simple movement patterns and timed intervals are accessible to most clients and will help them feel successful while they re-enter the regular routine of exercise.

Boot camp classes are popular because people get results and feel better. Remember to celebrate each success often and consistently, big or small. Clients who feel successful will return time and time again. Adherence to the program and the appropriate intensity that creates physical change makes boot camp classes popular. Focus on getting your clients to attend regularly and move at an intensity that gets results. A successful boot camp is created with consistency and intensity. And, CONSISTENCY and INTENSITY is what WATERinMOTION is all about!

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