

BackHab

History

BackHab is an integrated walking program. It incorporates alignment, core, muscle strengthening and muscle stretching in each stride.

Benefits

- Increase mobility with safe positioning
- Increase coordination
- Improve balance
- Increase strength
- Increase endurance
- Improve core stability
- Negative energy balance
- Pain reduction
- Reduce inflammation
- Increase ROM and general flexibility
- Improve speed and reaction time
- Improve motor skills

Equipment

Buoyant belts, noodles, etc – watch alignment

Weighted belts or ankle weights – watch for overload

Guidelines

- Begin slowly
- Move all exercises forward and backwards or right and left (move limbs and body in all ways)
- Repeat all exercises two to four minutes
- Use good technique as tolerated (stop with poor technique)
- Begin with conservative stride length
- 15 minutes (30 is ideal) at least three times a week

Progressions

Stop or pause – tone, osteoporosis, balance

Slow – trunk, balance, do without lifting or changing the stride design

Lengthen – cover more pool bottom with each step, keep it flowing

Arms – vary them or don't use them at all

Heavy – think heavy before using upper or lower extremities

Eyes / Head – look in a direction you are not moving

Power or force – more powerful or explosive movements

Depth – deeper is more difficult

For Groups:

Lines – create more turbulence and drag

Circles – changes balance and drag

BackHab

Groups or One on One

Applicable to all skill levels

Controlled low impact

Continuous drag and resistance

BackHab Exercises

Exercise: **Walk**

Goal: alignment

Considerations: chin back, neck long, rib cage lifted, shoulder blades down, diaphragmatic breathing

Progression: stop in midstride without changing alignment and begin again

Exercise: **Abdominal tightening and back stretches**

Goal: stretching and strengthening

Progression: repeat after every third exercise

Exercise: **Walk**

Goal: alignment, balance, coordination

Considerations: maintain alignment, eliminate leaning forward

Progression: slow, close eyes

Exercise: **Walk and Crunch**

Goal: alignment and awareness of deeper tissue abdominals

Considerations: use forced exhalation, eliminate leaning forward on crunch

Progression: arms behind, shorten or lengthen stride

Exercise: **Long stride**

Goal: joint mobility, muscle endurance/tone and stretch

Considerations: keep torso upright, perform weight shifting without “slamming”

Progression: slow, tilt back slightly

Exercise: **On Toes**

Goal: balance, coordination, experience of axial elongation

Considerations: eliminate leaning forward, keep flowing (not jerky)

Progression: lengthen stride

Exercise: **On Heels**

Goal: balance, stretch of gastrocnemius, endurance of tibialis anterior

Considerations: keep torso upright, keep flowing (not jerky)

Progression: no arms

Exercise: **Power Walk (lunging)**

Goal: muscle endurance for gluteals, hamstrings, quadriceps and trunk

Considerations: keep torso upright, eliminate ataxic swing on front leg due to weight shifting

Progression: close eyes

Exercise: **High Knee**

Goal: gluteal and hamstring endurance, flexibility

Considerations: lift both knees equally, press foot back when moving backwards

Progression: heavy, add pause or stop

Exercise: **Knee Out**

Goal: external hip rotation, coordination, balance

Considerations: equal external rotation with equal hip flexion

Progression: add stops or pauses

Exercise: **Circle and Step**

Goal: hip circumduction with vertical trunk control, coordination, balance

Considerations: begin by tracing a small half-circle on the pool bottom, progress to open chain

Progression: make the half circle bigger, hands behind back

Exercise: **Hamstring Curl (knee flexion)**

Goal: hamstring and quadricep endurance, knee joint structural stability

Considerations: eliminate hip flexion and low back hyperextension when moving forward, eliminate knee wobble

Progression: heavy

Exercise: **Rolling Heel to Toe, Toe to Heel**

Goal: coordination, stride awareness, pronation/supination awareness

Considerations: eliminate rocking body side, forward or back; compare feet

Progression: drag arms, slow

Exercise: **Walk the Line**

Goal: balance, stride awareness

Considerations: keep the torso forward (not turning), watch for pronation (stepping with instep first)

Progression: lengthen stride, turn head to side

Exercise: **Cross Over**

Goal: balance, strengthen obliques and latissimus dorsi, quadratus lumborum

Considerations: walk the line first, keep shoulders forward, use symmetrical movement, caution for hip replacements

Progression: look to side, close eyes, slow

Exercise: **Add Side lift (hip abduction)**

Goal: strengthen abductors and adductors, balance, structural stability for knee

Considerations: eliminate external hip rotation, equal lift and stride length

Progression: pause or stop

Exercise: **Add Dip (lunge)**

Goal: bending skills, increase muscle tone and flexibility

Considerations: maintain upright stance on lunge, lunge without "slamming"

Progression: use explosive power on abduction

Sideways moving

Exercise: Side Step

Goal: strengthen abductors and adductors, closed upright stance

Considerations: use wide stride, bring feet together, stand upright on together, toes forward

Progression: experiment with “slow” for one footed balance

Exercise: Add Dip (squat)

Goal: alignment, bending skills, strengthen gluteals, hamstrings, quadriceps

Considerations: maintain a straight spine on the squat, come up completely

Progression: support with hands on thighs and progress to hands behind back, experiment with feet together squat

Exercise: Add Crunch

Goal: recognition of deeper tissue abdominals, alignment

Considerations: keep torso upright, reverse to crunch on step apart, eliminate hyperventilation

Progression: hands out of water, hands behind back

Exercise: Cross Over

Goal: trunk stability, weight shifting, bending/straightening legs with lateral movement

Considerations: eliminate turning shoulders and turning hips

Progression: increase stride width, vary arms, slow

Exercise: Grapevine

Goal: trunk and hip stability and strength

Considerations: torso stays facing forward, keep upright alignment

Progression: slow

Exercise: Stretches

Goal: take advantage of warmed muscles to increase range of motion

Considerations: stretches will be felt in different places in each person

Progression: add flotation equipment

Please call these exercises whatever you like to make it work for you and the client.

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