

Aquatic therapy* is a skilled treatment by a physical therapist specially trained to use the water environment to benefit the individual client in many ways. For more information, visit CureDuchenne.org/care/videos/

The pool is great for those with Duchenne muscular dystrophy. It provides many benefits including:

- Buoyancy to reduce stress on muscles and joints.
- Mild resistance for low grade muscle work.
- Respiratory exercise to maintain and/or increase capacity and breath control.
- A fun, suitable place for social interaction with others.

Home-Based Pool Activities

Gliding

- Have him clasp his hands above his head and push off the wall to see how far he can glide with one breath or until his body floats to the surface.
- To decrease the work for the shoulders, have him place his hands at his side before pushing off the wall.
- While gliding he can pretend to swim like a shark, frog, dolphin, snake, etc., to get more mobility in many directions (up/down/sideways) and make it more fun.

Breath Control

- Encourage that he takes the biggest breath he can before playing any of the following activities:
- Search for pool toys under water. Place them within arm's reach and give him an order that he must pick them up. For example: say, "Go under and get the red, yellow and orange rings then come up."
- Sing songs or yell while under water. See if you can identify what each other is singing/saying.
- Practice bubbles under water until breath runs out. For a breath control activity, see if he can let one big bubble out at a time.
- Float face-down until he runs out of breath and roll to a back-float position. Take deep breaths working on rib expansion and then roll back to a face-down float.

Relaxing and Stretching

- While floating face up, do "snow angels" slowly and with the full range of motion of his shoulders and hips.
- While he is floating with his hands above his head, hold his hands and slowly pull him across the pool in a zig-zag line creating a snake-like motion of his body.
- Using the steps, he can do his calf and hamstring stretches with ease.

**Always monitor the physical demands of any pool program and consult a healthcare professional as needed.*