

# Health & Fitness

## A deliberate struggle in the water: 'Aqua Kinetics' is like swimming, only harder

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### Stretching Out



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#### ORIGINAL ARTICLE LINK:

[https://www.cleveland.com/healthfit/2010/11/enjoy\\_pilates\\_try\\_the\\_watered-.html](https://www.cleveland.com/healthfit/2010/11/enjoy_pilates_try_the_watered-.html)

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It's so easy, once you start exercising regularly, to begin thinking you're invincible, that you can do anything.

Then something like [Hydro-Pilates](#), a gentle but deceptively tricky form of movement performed in the water, comes along and knocks you down a peg.

That, at least, is what happened to me last month, when I visited LifeCenter Plus in Hudson, a former ice rink long since transformed into a capacious, multi-purpose health club.

There, in a soothing, warm-water pool, a group of older ladies took this fitness buff to school.

Hydro-Pilates, for the many who've probably never heard of it, is pretty much exactly what it sounds

like, non-impact strengthening and stretching movements performed in a pool.

The idea, conceived and trademarked by Florida-based fitness instructor **Ann Anthony**, is that by transplanting the basic movements of Pilates to the water, you're adding multi-directional resistance while reducing stress on the joints and eliminating the risk of falls or other injuries.

But if Hydro-Pilates sounds all warm and fuzzy in theory, it's surprisingly challenging in reality, especially if your equilibrium isn't great or your posture could use a little work. That, in fact, is why it appeals to older crowds: if your balance is poor, this takes direct aim at the problem.

Why, however, I was not only the youngest member in my class but also the only male, I'm not sure. Both genders and all ages stand to benefit from Hydro-Pilates.

Although the pool was as balmy and instantly-welcoming as a bath, our instructor spent the first few minutes on a warm-up. Only her intention wasn't to get the blood flowing so much as to simply loosen the muscles in the neck, shoulders, and hips.

What followed was a series of slow, careful poses, most requiring us to spend long periods balanced on one foot. We'd do things like raise one knee over and over or lift one leg and squat or tilt forward and back several times, all without firm footing.

The instructor asked us not to cut corners by making swimming motions with our arms, but I often caught myself cheating a little in the struggle to remain vertical. At least one of my class-mates had chosen to wear shoes. Kind of wish I'd thought of that.

I think I hewed more closely to proper form in exercises involving the upper body. If the movement involved raising or lowering the torso, initiating the motion from the abdomen or lower back, I had little trouble, presumably because my core is stronger than my balance.

But if it's possible to sweat in a pool, that's what I did: bead up, from both exertion and nervousness. My comrades, meanwhile, seemed more or less unfazed. I guess they're more comfortable than I am doing the Crane Kick from "Karate Kid."

Now here's the funny part. This was a beginner's class. Had I dropped into a more advanced group, the instructor said, I would have encountered a faster pace and additional resistance through the use of special chlorine-resistant exercise bands.

So I consider myself lucky. But I'm also humbled. I went in to Hydro-Pilates thinking it would be a piece of cake. Instead, it just proved once again there's always room for improvement.