



Growing Participation in Aquatics Programming for Senior Living Communities

Your pool represents significant (and expensive!) real estate at your community. Despite a lot of residents appreciating the amenity, we commonly see fairly low participation in pool-related programming. In fact, at many communities, the pool sits empty much of the day. Simply offering a handful of group fitness classes per week in the pool does not constitute an “aquatics program” and that limits the potential for making the amenity as marketable as possible to prospects. If you’re looking for suggestions to improve utilization in your community pool, check out the ideas below that have been tried and tested where NIFS manages senior living fitness programs.

- **Water Walking Clubs:** Much like you coordinate outdoor walking programs for residents to track their minutes or miles walked on the grounds of the community, create programs for residents to track laps or minutes walked in the pool. This can be a great program for beginners who can feel accomplished by walking at their own pace, in their preferred water depth, and using the side of the pool if desired. Residents can walk independently or in groups for more socialization.
- **Luau or Social Hour in the Pool:** There is a good chance that some residents have never stepped foot near the pool in your community. Coordinate a luau or social party (think happy hour!) in the pool to simply invite residents to explore the space further and learn more about the programming.
- **Create a Sun Room Environment:** You can also create an indoor patio type environment in your pool where residents can use the space as a sun room of sorts. Provide patio furniture clustered into pods where residents can gather to play cards or simply sit and read.
- **Water Volleyball or Recreation Games:** Add weekly recreational games to your pool program calendar by designating water volleyball, basketball, or other games for residents to play together. You can host workshops to teach participants how to play.
- **One on One Training:** Much like the equipment in your community fitness center, some residents don’t use the pool because they don’t know how to get started. Offering one-on-one training in the pool can provide residents with the direction they need to safely and effectively adopt a pool routine. Beginner workouts in the pool can also help participants improve balance and mobility that allows them to progress to exercising in the fitness center or land-based group fitness classes as well.
- **Dedicated Incentive Programs:** As you develop incentive programs for your fitness center, fold in recognition for participation in the pool or create a spinoff incentive program to encourage more people to use the pool.

To find out more about bringing NIFS staff onsite to manage your fitness center, visit our website wellness.nifs.org or contact Bethany Garrity at 317-274-3432 or by email.

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