



## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN WATER

### AQUA PRACTICES, HISTORICAL ASPECTS, PREVENTION

BILYANA RANGELOVA

**Aqua practice** is physical activity in water that has a multifaceted effect on the human body. It is useful and desirable primarily because of the ability to achieve versatile and harmonious physical development. Aqua practice strengthens health, it is equally necessary for all people of all ages.

**Aqua therapy** is generally the use of water, induced water jet, or waves to improve physical functioning. Another definition presents water therapy as a therapeutic procedure that seeks to improve the body's functions by applying water-based therapeutic exercises. These procedures require them to be performed by a therapist trained in performing water therapy exercises. In modern practice, there is a great variety of techniques and methods due to the scientifically proven benefits for all types of health conditions.

The sports and activities that are practiced in water are increasingly popular in Bulgaria and around the world and generally are used for prevention, recovery, sports, and entertainment. Through its specific properties, water provides opportunities for easy movement of the individual, which on land could be associated with a number of difficulties. Participants in these practices learn to get used to the aquatic environment, acquire new skills, and are encouraged to engage in them in the long run.

The category of water sports includes:

- Sailing;
- Water Polo;
- Aqua aerobics;
- Rowing;
- Swimming;
- Underwater sports;
- Diving;
- Surfing;
- Artistic (synchronized) swimming.

#### **Historical aspects of the history of swimming.**

Since ancient times, the cult of water and its healing and hardening properties has existed. Swimming has been used throughout all eras in the development of mankind as an applied, educational, healing, and hygiene necessity. Swimming was a natural necessity of all people living in water areas. In Ancient Greece and Rome, water, massage, and exercise were considered as the three main remedies.

A popular event to this day is the crossing of the Strait of La Manish, which was first done in 1815 by the French soldier Jean Saladi, and nowadays one of the best achievements is held by the Bulgarian Petar Stoychev.

Swimming was not included in the ancient Olympics. Swimming competitions were held at the Isthmian Games dedicated to the god of the sea Poseidon. Swimming joined the Olympics program in 1896 in Athens for the first time. In 1908, the International Swimming Federation (FINA)



# SOFIA UNIVERSITY "ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI"

15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd, 1504 Sofia, Bulgaria,

Tel. (+359-2) 9442749,9308 / 435; Fax (+359-2) 943-38-18; e-mail: sport\_su@abv.bg

was established. Due to the great importance and spread of swimming, it became the second most representative sport (after track and field), in the Olympics programs, consisting of 31 disciplines.

The first Olympic champion in swimming (at the 1896 Athens Olympics) was 18-year-old Hungarian architecture student Alfred Hayosh. He uses a trudgen stroke. He won in extremely bad conditions (water temperature 10°C and 4-meter waves).

Depending on the rules, since 1908 Olympic competitions have been held either in 50 or 100 meters pools (the IV, V, and VII Olympics were held in 100-meter pools) and since 1924 they have been held only in 50 meters pools.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the crawl style gradually replaced the trudgen stroke, the backstroke appeared, and later - the butterfly stroke.

In Bulgaria, the beginning of this sport was set in 1871 in the town of Shumen, where swimming lessons were held for the first time on the Kamchia River. Its development marked a great rise after the construction of the first indoor swimming pool in the building of the Sofia Central Mineral Bath in 1900.

The 1980s are elite for the history of swimming in Bulgaria:

- In 1983 at the European Championships held in Rome, Tanya Bogomolova won her first medal.
- At the European Championship held in Sofia in 1985, Bulgarian swimmers added 6 new medals to our humble swimming history.
- At the World Championship held in Madrid in 1985, Tanya Bogomolova won two new medals.
- At the Olympic Games held in Seoul in 1988, Bulgarian swimming was at the top. Tanya Bogomilova won an Olympic title and set an Olympic record in the 200 m breaststroke. Antoaneta Frenkeva also achieved a historic success, leaving the games with two medals - a silver in the 100 m breaststroke and a bronze in the 200m breaststroke.
- In 2021 Yosif Miladinov wrote a new page on the history of Bulgarian swimming. At the European Championships in Budapest, Miladinov won a silver medal in the 100 m butterfly, and a few months later he finished eighth at the Tokyo Olympics.

The Bulgarian successes in the marathon swimming are also remarkable, the beginning of which was set in 1914 with the swimming of the distance Cape Galata - Varna. Petar Stoychev paves the way for our generations of swimming marathoners with his remarkable career. In 2011 in Shanghai, Stoychev became the world champion in 25 km open water swimming. In the period 2001-2013, he was the undisputed winner of the World Cup in the swimming marathon - at the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008, he finished sixth in the discipline 10 km.

In the world history of swimming so far, we can call two competitors PHENOMENONS. For the ladies, this is the American Dara Torres - 12-times Olympic medalist and world record holder in three competitions. The first and only athlete to represent the United States in five Olympic Games (1984, 1988, 1992, 2000, and 2008). At the age of 41, she was a member of the US Olympic team for the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics. Dara Torres has won 12 Olympics medals (four gold, four silver, four bronze), she is one of the three women in the world with most Olympics medals. Torres won five medals at the Sydney Summer Olympics in 2000 when she was 33 and the oldest member of the



swimming team at the time. In all five Olympic Games in which she competed, she won at least one medal.

In men, the phenomenon is called Michael Phelps. The athlete with the most Olympics gold medals of all time. In his sports career, Phelps has won 28 Olympic medals, he was an Olympic champion 23 times, holds the records for the most gold medals of all times (23), holds the records for the most gold medals in individual competition (13), and holds the records for the most Olympic medals in the men's individual competition (16).

## **Prevention in the practice of water sports.**

Along with the positive effect on the psycho-emotional and physical status of the body, water hides many dangers. Awareness and the introduction of specific measures and rules to avoid and overcome risk situations caused by many medical conditions are mandatory. It is imperative to highlight the risk factors that activities in the aquatic environment hide. It is necessary to highlight the leading and specific risk situations caused by them. According to the Bulgarian Red Cross, water accidents in Bulgaria are not uncommon, and all too often the victims are young people who have taken a bath in various bodies of water. Knowing the dangers of swimming and bathing is an opportunity to prevent water injuries. Key points for the success of good prevention are adequate information, communication, and exchange of information, good planning and delegation of responsibility, levels of decision-making to ensure safety, sufficient equipment. The most common causes of drowning are ignorance of the dangers of swimming and bathing, inability to adequately get out of dangerous situations that occur during swimming, long stay in the water, leading to cooling and cramping in different muscle groups (muscle cramps), swimming to exhaustion or great fatigue, incorrect distribution of forces, loss of orientation, nausea, dizziness (labyrinthine fever), swimming immediately after eating or consuming alcohol, etc. narcotics, currents or vortices, injuries when entering the water by jumping, swimming near the area for motor vessels, surfboards, and boats, as well as near anchored vessels, use of inflatable objects in the wind or the presence of water currents, strong excitement, and surf, ignorance of giving help to a drowning person.

As a prevention to reduce the chances of accidents, it is necessary to follow the rules (flag landmarks), to enter the water only in the designated places. After a heavy meal, you should wait about one or two hours. Swimming after drinking alcohol or using drugs often leads to tragic consequences. Do not enter the water with chewing gum in your mouth. When in a whirlpool, the swimmer must take as deep a breath as possible, descend to the bottom and push away from it sideways and upwards.

When in the current, you swim obliquely on it and then to the shore or lie on your back with your head bent to the sides, back in the direction of the shore, saving energy without exerting unnecessary effort, which would lead to exhaustion of the body. The entry into the water is gradual. When muscle cramps occur, self-control should be maintained. When inhaling air, the human body has a positive buoyancy, which allows the retention of the water surface without swimming movements. With one or two hands, the limb is folded and unfolded in order to stretch the muscle several times until it relaxes. A life jacket must be worn when using vessels.

**Avoid dangerous games. Maintain self-control in event of an accident and seek help immediately.**