

> CONNECTING ABILITIES

Group 3: Low Muscle Tone

Muscle tone refers to the amount of tension in the muscles. Muscle tone is required to perform natural and normal human movements. Low muscle tone describes a condition where the muscles are floppy.

People with low muscle tone require more effort to get their muscles to work and move properly. Low muscle tone impacts an individual's gross motor development e.g., sitting, walking and rolling, and can affect posture and the ability to stand or sit. Reduced mobility and fitness can affect a person's functioning including mobility, stamina or motor control.

Strand	Suggestions to Adapt	Tips
Hazards and Personal Safety	<p>Engage students by utilising active learning for hazards and personal safety.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use visuals and have students place them in groups for home, public pools and other environments 2. Create a game using equipment to represent different hazards and personal safety. 3. Change the name of regular equipment for a lesson to see if the messages resonate. 4. If there is available space develop different stations for older students with activities at each station. 	<p>Refer to the "First and Then" and "Provide the Boundaries" Effective Teaching Strategies.</p>
Entry and Exit	<p>Some students may require different equipment or assistance to enter and exit the water.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walk in - allows access with assistance via wheelchair, walking frame or independent walk in. Students can enjoy the feeling of buoyancy. 2. Stairs/steps/ladders - use if the student is comfortable. Ensure they hold the handrail for support. Assistance via a short arm hold could be provided. 3. Slide in and seated entry - use if the student is comfortable. The student must be comfortable with body rotations, balance, recovery and standing. 4. Ramps - ramps provide a controlled entry into the water. They are great with aquatic wheelchairs, as they provide a slow gradual water entry, and can encourage independence. You will need to be close by to assist as the student may not be prepared for buoyancy as they enter the pool via a ramp. 	<p>Refer to "Assess, Adapt, Apply" Teaching Strategies.</p>
Flotation	<p>Flotation can be challenging for students with muscle tone issues as it can unexpectedly positively affect the ability to float. A student may have low flexibility on land and may relax and have increased flexibility in warm water.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Once a student is comfortable getting their face wet and submerging. Floating on the front and back can then be introduced. 2. Rotations are introduced when they have better control of their body. 3. Buoyancy provides the opportunity for muscle relaxation, reduced pain and deep pressure. 4. Flotation devices (noodles, swim rings, flotation mats) provide additional support. 	<p>The difference in sensation for the student is important to acknowledge. They may be experiencing something completely new. Provide time to become familiar with the instructions, skills and this additional sensation they may be experiencing for the first time.</p>

<p>Swimming</p>	<p>For many students, being in water brings a sensory experience that can have great benefits. Benefits include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased blood supply, reducing muscle spasms and healing injury. 2. More demanding exercises can be achieved with lower cardiac effort. 3. Flexibility can be improved from the greater range of movement that can be achieved in the water. 4. Buoyancy provides the opportunity for muscle relaxation, reduced pain and deep pressure. 5. When teaching, assist with slipstream. Stand in front of the student and walk backwards creating movement of the water which assists with the forward motion of the student. 	<p>Use soft balls or squeeze toys to develop hand strength.</p>
<p>Underwater</p>	<p>There are generally 3 categories of students when going underwater, these also apply to students with low muscle tone.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students who will generally learn at a mainstream pace. These students will follow the instructions provided to the rest of the class and submersion will not provide too much of a challenge. 2. Students who enjoy going underwater and are constantly under the water can be challenging. The best strategy to use for this is "First and Then". 3. Adverse to going under water - sometimes moving toward a horizontal position can be scary and you may find the person reacting in grabbing, hitting or panicking. <p>This is a clear sign that they aren't ready to submerge. Change to another activity that they already know. Reflect on your strategy for submerging and consider other ways to prepare them. Being consistent and building up trust will be critical.</p>	<p>Never force a student underwater if they are not displaying signs of readiness.</p> <p>Be prepared to go underwater with your students. Show them it's fun.</p> <p>Refer to "First and Then" and the "Call and Response" Effective Teaching Strategies.</p> <p>Refer to "Assess, Adapt, Apply" Teaching Strategies.</p>
<p>Lifesaving</p>	<p>The lifesaving strand can be intense for some students. It is important to provide breaks.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attention and sensory breaks provide an opportunity for students to centre themselves and potentially calm down if they are heightened in the situation. 2. Physical breaks provide a rest for students from physical effort so they can gain the appropriate energy to continue with further activities or skills. 3. During any breaks it is a great opportunity to revise activities that have occurred or provide instruction for upcoming ones. 4. Provide a transition activity that signals that the conclusion of an activity or lesson is approaching. This may be a particular game, song or activity that is the same each time. This assists with the mental adjustment and consistency that a student needs to rely upon to feel safe and confident in the aquatic environment. 5. Provide clear and concise explanations regarding equipment and the use of each item before the activity or skill. 	<p>Breaks may not be required everytime. However, is important to refer to "Assess, Adapt, Apply" and not dismiss what may have been applied in the lesson prior.</p> <p>Situations and students needs may have change.</p> <p>Refer to "Provide the Boundaries" Effective Teaching Strategy to create expectations.</p>

<p>Rescue</p>	<p>The rescue strand can be challenging for some students and breaks are important to consider.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attention and sensory breaks provide an opportunity for students to centre themselves and potentially calm down if they are heightened in the situation. 2. Physical breaks provide a rest for students from physical effort so they can gain the appropriate energy to continue with further activities and skills. 3. During any breaks it is a great opportunity to revise activities that have occurred or provide instruction for upcoming ones. 4. Provide a transition activity that signals that the conclusion of an activity or lesson is approaching. This may be a particular game, song or activity that is the same each time. This assists with the mental adjustment and consistency that a student needs to rely upon to feel safe and confident in the aquatic environment. 5. Provide clear and concise explanations regarding equipment and the use of each item before the activity or skill. 	<p>Refer to “Provide the Boundaries” Effective Teaching Strategy to create expectations.</p>
<p>Sequencing and Survival</p>	<p>The sequencing and survival strand can be the most intense for some students. It is important to provide breaks.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attention and sensory breaks provide an opportunity for students to centre themselves and potentially calm down if they are heightened in the situation. 2. Physical breaks provide a rest for students from physical effort so they can gain the appropriate energy to continue with further activities and skills. 3. During any breaks it is a great opportunity to revise activities that have occurred or provide instruction for upcoming ones. 4. Provide a transition activity that signals that the conclusion of an activity or lesson is approaching. This may be a particular game, song or activity that is the same each time. This assists with the mental adjustment and consistency that a student needs to rely upon to feel safe and confident in the aquatic environment. 5. Provide clear and concise explanations regarding equipment and the use of each item before the activity or skill. 	<p>Refer to “Provide the Boundaries” Effective Teaching Strategy to create expectations.</p>