

# Aquawareness and Ai Chi

Aquawareness is an innovative discipline developed by Giancarlo De Leo that transforms swimming into a meditative experience by combining mindfulness principles with the aquatic environment[1]. It focuses on body and mental awareness in the water, promoting safety, freedom, and survival skills[1]. Ai Chi, on the other hand, is a water-based practice derived from Tai Chi, incorporating a set sequence of movements to enhance strength and flexibility[1]. It was created in 1991 by Jun Konno[2].

Here's a comparison of the two practices:

## **Aquawareness:**

- **Environment:** Utilizes complete immersion in water, especially salt water, as a meditative catalyst[1].
- **Approach:** Emphasizes free sensory exploration without predefined choreographic sequences, focusing on perception rather than technical perfection[1].
- **Energy Dynamics:** Focuses on a hydro-sensory flow, using hydrostatic pressure as a proprioceptive stimulus[1].
- **Movement:** Reactive and fluid[1].
- **Philosophical Aspect:** Integrates fluid physics with mindfulness techniques, connecting to the cellular memory of the amniotic environment[1].

## **Ai Chi:**

- **Approach:** Adopts codified movements to improve strength and flexibility[1].
- **Energy:** Works on Qi/Chi[1].
- **Movement:** Programmed and structured, involving calm Tai Chi movements in warm water[1][4].

Aquawareness helps develop a dual awareness by integrating the understanding of both internal and external environments[1]. It encourages mindful observation of internal reactions (thoughts, feelings) while being aware of the external environment (water resistance, movement, sounds)[1]. Sensory engagement is emphasized through elements like water texture, temperature changes and auditory cues, enhancing awareness of physical sensations and emotional responses[1]. Emotional regulation is fostered through mindful practices, enabling participants to recognize and manage their emotional reactions[1]. Reflective practice encourages analysis of how internal states affect interactions with the aquatic environment, promoting self-awareness and insight[1].

[1] <https://www.fuorimag.it/2025/01/?print=pdf-search>

[2] <https://watsu.iport.it/massaggio-aichi.html>

[3]

<https://www.riabilitazione.com/it/n/ai-chi-una-nuova-possibilita-di-riabilitazione-in-acqua/121>

[4]

<http://www.watsu.it/it/calendario-watsu-per-tutti/altri-bodyworks-acquatici/ai-chi>

[5] <https://www.lifegate.it/ai-chi-fitness-cuore>

[6]

<https://www.ohga.it/ai-chi-larte-di-muoverti-in-acqua-secondo-le-antiche-usanze-orientali/>

[7]

<https://mediakey.it/news/acqua-di-sirmione-accresce-awareness-e-consideration-con-linfluencer-marketing-di-intarget/>

[8] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Une4lWTKGLg>

### **Key Principles of Aquawareness:**

- **Mental Presence** It is based on actively listening to physical sensations and the aquatic environment through a “floating meditation” that favors initial receptive passivity[1][2]. This approach is reminiscent of early

sensory experiences in amniotic fluid[1][2].

- **Body-Water Relational Dynamics** Uses specific positions such as the “egg” gathering to cancel voluntary propulsion[1][2]. It exploits Archimedes’ law as a tool for psychophysical abandonment and transforms the pliability of water into an opportunity for motor exploration[1][2].
- **Learning Phases** Involves non-judgmental observation of body-water reactions[1][2].
- **Conscious Breathing:** Controlling breath is essential in swimming and meditation, synchronizing breathing with movements helps to maintain calm and concentration[1][2].
- **Fluid Movement:** Adopting slow and controlled movements promotes energy efficiency and reduces physical stress[1][2].
- **Connection with Water:** Perceiving water not just as a medium, but as a partner in the experience, feeling the support and resistance it offers[1][2].

### **Key differences of Aquawareness:**

- **Environment and Context** Aquawareness utilizes complete immersion in water (especially salt water) as a meditative catalyst[1][2]. It transforms water resistance into a therapeutic ally, unlike yoga or Tai Chi that work against terrestrial gravity[1][2].
- **Methodological Approach** Aquawareness eliminates pre-established sequences found in Ai Chi or aquatic Tai Chi, and focuses on perception rather than technical perfection, unlike yoga asanas[1][2].
- **Energy Dynamics** Aquawareness replaces the concept of chakra/prana with a hydro-sensory flow and transforms hydrostatic pressure into proprioceptive stimulus, unlike Qi Gong which works on the body’s energy field[1][2].

- **Philosophical Aspect** Aquawareness relates to the cellular memory of the amniotic environment and integrates principles of fluid physics with mindfulness techniques, an approach absent in terrestrial methods[1][2].

The practice involves mindful observation of internal reactions, like thoughts and feelings, while staying aware of the external environment, including water resistance and sounds[1][2]. Through mindful practices, emotional regulation is also fostered, helping practitioners recognize and manage their emotional reactions[1][2].

[1] <https://www.fuorimag.it/14552-2/>

[2] <https://www.fuorimag.it/14552-2/?print=pdf>

[3]

<https://www.ganeshayogatiziana.com/acqua-yoga-tra-fluidita-e-saggezza-millenaria/>

[4]

<https://www.radiowellness.it/awa-metodo-meditazione-in-acqua/>

[5]

<https://www.nuoto.com/articolo/notizie/editoria/nuoto-antistress-come-praticare-la-mindfulness-in-acqua/>

[6] <https://www.indiansavage.com/acqua-intenzionata/>

[7] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zh8te9CBhl8>

[8] <https://www.yoga-magazine.it/2021/03/come-acqua/>

I principali benefici dell'Aquawareness includono:

- **Riduzione dello stress e dell'ansia:** La combinazione di esercizio fisico e meditazione aiuta a liberare la mente da pensieri negativi, promuovendo uno stato di calma interiore[1][2].
- **Miglioramento delle abilità natatorie:** Una maggiore consapevolezza del proprio corpo e dei movimenti può affinare la tecnica di nuoto, rendendola più efficace e piacevole[1][2].

- **Aumento della sicurezza e libertà in acqua:** L'Aquawareness aumenta il livello di sicurezza e libertà in acqua[1][2].
- **Aumento delle capacità di sopravvivenza:** Incrementa le capacità di sopravvivenza in condizioni critiche[1].
- **Benessere fisico:** Il nuoto è un esercizio a basso impatto che coinvolge tutto il corpo e, integrato con la meditazione, promuove il rilassamento muscolare e la rigenerazione cellulare[1].
- **Crescita personale:** L'Aquawareness favorisce l'introspezione e la comprensione di sé, contribuendo allo sviluppo personale e all'equilibrio emotivo[1].

#### Citations:

[1] <https://www.fuorimag.it/14552-2/>

[2] <https://www.fuorimag.it/14552-2/?print=pdf>

[3] <https://www.indiansavage.com/acqua-intenzionata/>

[4]

<https://www.ganeshayogatiziana.com/acqua-yoga-tra-fluidita-e-saggezza-millemaria/>

[5]

<https://www.radiowellness.it/awa-metodo-meditazione-in-acqua/>

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[7] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zh8te9CBhl8>

[8] <https://www.yoga-magazine.it/2021/03/come-acqua/>

Aquawareness, developed by Giancarlo De Leo, enhances body awareness in the water through a combination of mindfulness and specific techniques[1].

Key aspects of developing body awareness in Aquawareness:

- **Mental Presence:** Aquawareness is based on actively listening to physical sensations and the aquatic environment, achieved through a “floating

meditation”[1]. This approach promotes an initial receptive passivity, reminiscent of early sensory experiences in amniotic fluid[1].

- **Proprioception Development:** Practicing in water stimulates body sensitivity and motor control[2]. Contact with the water amplifies tactile sensations, improving awareness of how the body moves and interacts with the aquatic environment[2].
- **Body-Water Relational Dynamics:** Aquawareness uses specific positions, like the “egg” gathering, to cancel voluntary propulsion[1]. It transforms water from a passive element to an active co-therapist in the practice, creating a man-environment symbiosis that’s impossible to replicate in non-aquatic contexts[1].
- **Mindful Body Scan:** Similar to mindfulness techniques, Aquawareness involves focusing attention on different body areas to enhance awareness[3][5]. This practice encourages individuals to connect with their bodies in the present moment[5].
- **Conscious Breathing:** Controlling breath is essential, as synchronizing breathing with movements helps to maintain calm and concentration[1].
- **Fluid Movement:** Adopting slow and controlled movements promotes energy efficiency and reduces physical stress[1].
- **Connection with Water:** Perceiving water not just as a medium, but as a partner in the experience, feeling the support and resistance it offers[1].
- **Non-judgmental Observation:** Observing body-water reactions without judgment is a key learning phase[1].

Through these elements, Aquawareness aims to create a deep connection between mind, body, and water, transforming swimming into a meditative and regenerative experience[1]. This heightened body awareness can improve swimming abilities by refining technique and promoting relaxation[1][2].

## Citations:

- [1] <https://www.fuorimag.it/14552-2/?print=pdf>
- [2] <https://www.fuorimag.it/vipassana-e-aquawareness/>
- [3] <http://www.michelebovo.org/articoli2/1-mindfulness-e-apnea>
- [4] <https://www.igmanagement.it/event/body-awareness/>
- [5] <https://eventiyoga.it/aumentare-la-consapevolezza/>
- [6] <https://www.iusveducation.it/consapevolezza-corporea-e-autoregolazione-nello-sport-il-protocollo-bahiya-s/>
- [7] <https://www.unisi.it/sites/default/files/allegatiparagrafo/Dispensa%20Tecniche%20di%20consapevolezza%20corporea%202019-20.pdf>
- [8] <https://www.neuropsicomotricista.it/argomenti/tesi-di-laurea-in-tnpee/il-se-corporeo-in-terapia-neuropsicomotoria-concetti-teorici-osservazione-esperienza-clinica/il-se-corporeo-percezione-organizzazione-e-rappresentazione-del-corpo-in-terapia-neuropsicomotoria.html>

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[8]

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