



Photos by MAGGIE FITZROY/Staff

Madalin Keeble works up a sweat on land as she leads Silver Splash aquatics exercise students through routines at the Winston Family YMCA.

# Seniors get cool workout in the 'Silver Splash' class

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Dressed in a swimsuit and sneakers, aerobics teacher Madalin Keeble stood at the edge of the Winston Family YMCA pool deck and faced her students in the water.

"You can move as much water as you want and make it as hard as you want," she told them as she flicked a switch on a CD player to start the music. "Just keep moving, and have a good time."

For warm-ups, Keeble kicked her feet out and walked in circles as her students imitated her in the water.

Speeding it up, she jumped up and down, swiveled her hips and moved her arms like a monkey climbing a tree. They did too.

Exercising on land, Keeble, 55, worked up a sweat and periodically grabbed a towel to wipe her face.

Exercising in the water, her senior citizen students kept cool.

But they're getting more of a workout, she said Tuesday during a break in the YMCA's new aquatics "Silver Splash" exercise class.

"When you lift your leg on land and then put it back down, gravity helps move it through the air," she said. "But in the water, you have to use your muscles to move against the water."

Since it's also cooler, she said, "you don't realize until the next day you've



Joyce Russell of Jacksonville Beach does water aerobics exercises with a specially designed splash board.

been working out."

The class, which is part of a national Healthways Silver Sneakers program, is offered from 10:10 to 11:10 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays at the YMCA in Ponte Vedra Beach.

The program is free for Medicare-eligible people who have participating health care plans. Since it started this month, the class is also proving popular with seniors who don't have those plans, including members of The Players Community Senior Center across the street on Landrum Lane, who receive discount rates.

The YMCA already offered water aerobics classes at 10:10 Mondays and Wednesdays for all ages, aquatics director Tukz Taaca said. When he added the Silver Splash class, he collaborated with Players site manager Vicki Van Horn to make the classes affordable for seniors who are not YMCA members. They can pay \$5 a class or \$30 a month for aquatics classes Monday through Thursday; call 543-9622 for more information.

Water is "the perfect medium" for

SENIORS continues on 7

## Seniors

Continued from Page 1

senior workout routines because movements are slower, Taaca said. Water supports the body but also adds resistance, which increases strength.

As an alternative to swimming laps, water aerobics classes are a different type of workout, he said. "You don't even have to be able to swim."

Keeble, of Ponte Vedra Beach, has been teaching land-based aerobics classes for 30 years. She said that when she lived in Atlanta, she taught actress Jane Fonda, who popularized aerobic dancing in the 1980s.

As a certified water aerobics instructor, she's enthusiastic about the benefits of the water exercises for people who have conditions such as arthritis.

"Water is a supportive blanket; water heals," she said. "When you are in the water, your heart beats eight to 12 times a minute slower, so it's good for hypertension."

After she gave her 10 students a short break to socialize, she handed out specially designed Silver Sneakers splash boards. Gripping one side, she showed them how to push against the

water, then how to turn them like a steering wheel.

Shortly before the end of the class, Keeble jumped into the water to join her students, and when it ended, told them "great job today, give yourselves a hand."

Joyce Russell of Jacksonville Beach said she looks forward to the class all week for the exercise and social benefits.

"Madalin keeps us laughing and moving," she said. "It's a wonderful day out."

"It lets you exercise all your muscles without straining them," said Pat Currie, also of Jacksonville Beach. "And it's nice being out here in the sunshine."

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