



NSW

Health Benefits Of Surfing For Body And Mind Blog Extract

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Health benefits of surfing for body and mind



Nina Whitby Wavemaker - Content

Surfing is great exercise. The physical and mental health benefits are well known within the surf community and evidence is growing about just how good surfing is for you. It combines aerobic exercise and strength training with a stress-relieving mental health workout as you progress and develop new skills. That's why we love it so much.



Surfing is one of the top 'blue health' activities which draw on the known therapeutic effects of being active in or near water such as lakes, rivers or the sea. This is currently the subject of a Europe-wide study into the links between environment, climate and health. We also published a report bringing together research into Blue Health, surfing therapy and its benefits for mental health and wellbeing which you can find [here](#).

Here's our round up of some of the amazing benefits of surfing, explaining why it is so good for body and mind.

Boosts heart health

Surfing is a great cardiovascular exercise. The workout you get through surfing builds up heart strength through a mixture of paddling, standing on the board and working your core muscles. We love the way it makes you feel but the impact it has on your overall fitness by improving your heart health is impressive.

Improves mental health

Nothing clears the mind like time spent learning to surf or improving your surf skills. Surfing requires complete focus and concentration so is a great way to step away from day-to-day life and wipe away the effects of stress. One evidence-based technique for improving mental wellbeing - recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence - is mindfulness. In mindfulness, you learn to develop an awareness of what is going on around you and inside yourself from moment to moment. The concentration and awareness demanded for surfing can be seen as 'mindfulness in action' and it's a great way to meditate.

Helps coordination and balance

Learning to surf can be tricky but that's also one of the things that makes us love it so much. We love falling over. We do it a lot and it makes us smile. But standing up is really what we strive for and we love the sense of improved balance and coordination we get when we're standing on a board.

This can also lead to an all-round better quality of life as we get older. Falling is a big risk for older people who can get serious or life-threatening complications from broken bones. Maintaining good balance, coordination and muscle strength is important for enjoying later life and staying independent.

A study of older surfers by Australia's Southern Cross University found that long-term recreational surfing appeared to maintain or improve balance, coordination and control, better than in active older people who didn't surf.

Improves sleep

Exercise can help you get a better night's sleep. But the links between exercise and sleep are complex and the wrong sort of exercise at the wrong time can actually interfere with your sleep. It's not as simple as the idea that just being tired after a workout will make sleep easier and the benefits can take time to kick in. But the good news for surfers is that regular cardio workouts do appear to contribute to better sleep patterns. Doing the exercise in the day rather than close to bedtime also appears beneficial for sleep – and again, most of us aren't surfing at bedtime. The great thing about surfing is it doesn't feel like exercise so you can get all the benefits of a good workout that will help you sleep better by just doing something you enjoy.

Strengthens muscles

As well as building muscle strength in your upper body and legs, the cross-training effect of surfing is a brilliant workout for your core, making it a full body workout. A lot of surf research suggests we use our trapezius, rectus abdominis, latissimus dorsi, obliques, triceps, biceps and deltoids. In other words, a lot of our muscles.

Burns calories

Officially classed as a 'vigorous' exercise by health experts, surfing is a great way to burn calories and burns roughly the same amount of calories as football, rock climbing or a session in the gym. It is also low impact, so much better for your knees and hip joints than exercises like running.

Blue Health

Respond to the following questions in full sentences.

1. List 5 health benefits of surfing.

2. What does the term "credible" mean?

3. Is this blog post credible? Justify your response.

4. What does the term "blue health" mean?

5. TASK: Chunk "Blue Health"

- Re-read the blog post.
- **Number** the paragraphs
- **Highlight** in one colour words and terms that are unfamiliar
- On top of the words you have highlighted, write a **synonym** on top of that term/word.
- **Highlight** in a different colour, **key words** that express the main points of the paragraph
- In the **margin next to the paragraph** you are "chunking", write the **key points** you have highlighted.
- Read the notes in the margin to ensure you can write your own notes from the key words

6. In your notebook:

Blue Health

Use **Subheadings** and the **key words** and terms in the margin of the handout to construct **meaningful notes** about the **health benefits** of surfing. Make sure to include **evidence** from what you have read.