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Scuba Fitness and Music



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*The backwall of **Molokini Crater** was more picturesque than usual. With visibility of 150-200 feet Gray Reef, White Tip and Galapagos Sharks cruised below. A Blue Dragon Nudibranch was a treat to find, and the Pyramid Butterfly Fish were especially bright. But the real joy of this dive was the orchestra of Humpback Whales.*



Humpback Whales near Molokini Crater, Haw aii
Gretchen M. Ashton, Photographer

The underwater melodies of the whales struck a transforming chord which made this a most memorable underwater experience.

The effects of whale songs during a SCUBA dive are similar to how music enhances exercise. While your choice of your music is a factor, music evokes mental, physical and emotional responses. Although heart rate is only moderately affected, all types of music slightly alter heart rate. Your heart rate increases in response to faster music and decreases in response to slower music. **Studies** performed on the subject of music and aerobic exercise indicate music can be motivational. It seems to influence mental attitude more than physical ability, but disguises and reduces factors of exercise discomfort, stress and anxiety. You are likely to exercise longer and are be more consistent in an exercise program if you listen to music.

Studies performed on the subject of music and strength training found no real difference when listening to upbeat music over silence, but found a decrease in strength when listening to calming music over silence and upbeat music. Divers will benefit from at least a couple of days of strength training each week.

Aerobic exercise is the highest priority for divers. Music and exercise is probably best applied

in aerobic dance classes. In 1993 with the introduction of step aerobics, Reebok established "beats per minute" (bpm) guidelines for a six-inch step of 120-122 bpm. The higher the bpm the more difficult the class may be. Today, you have many varieties of aerobic classes to choose from. Average heart rate is between 72-80 bpm and most music tempos are from 70-170 bpm. The following is a list of types of aerobic classes and their typical bpm:

- Low Impact Aerobics (133-148 bpm)
- High Impact Aerobics (135-160 bpm)
- Mid-Impact Aerobics (130-140 bpm)
- Step Aerobics (120-127 bpm)
- Super Step Aerobics (126-138 bpm)
- Interval Aerobics (123-150 bpm)
- Circuit Aerobics/Resistance (123-16 bpm)
- Warm Up (120-134 bpm)

If you are interested in participating in aerobics classes to maintain your physical fitness for diving:

- read class descriptions carefully,
- ask the instructor the bpm of the class,
- inform the instructor if you are new to class and of any injuries or **health** concerns,
- monitor your individual heart rate, (it will not be the same as the class bpm), and
- modify your movements and intensity to work at your own level.

You may also benefit from listening to music while **walking outdoors**.