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Scuba Fitness in Taveuni, Fiji Islands (Photos)



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December 3, 2012

“ *Diving the Somosomo Strait is exhilarating! ScubaFit® recommends strength, endurance and advanced diving skills for this diving adventure.* ”

The island of **Taveuni** is one of the most picturesque locals we've visited. We went there for the diving - which is amazing - and we fell in love with the people. We stayed at **Garden Island Resort** and spent nine days diving with **Rainbow Reef Divers**. The resort staff and **dive team** provided impeccable service. The spa-like rooms opened directly onto the water with views of the strait and Vanua Levu.

Sunsets were spectacular. One of the most memorable sights were the daily multiple rainbows over the island equaled only by the spectrum of brilliant soft corals of the Rainbow Reef. The dive shop and boat were a mere 100-feet from our room. On three-dive days, mid-day surface intervals were spent relaxing in a quiet cove near Vanua Levu where we were served a hot lunch delivered by the resort to the dive boat.

On non-diving days we explored the island; walking to the **Wairiki Mission**, completing the Lavena Coastal Trek; a three to five hour trail to remote waterfalls, and hiking part of the Bouma Falls trail.

Dive sites we explored during our stay were The Ledge, Storm Warning, The Zoo, Fingers, Sam's Point, Rainbow's End, Jack's Place, Blue Ribbon Eel Reef, Great White Wall, The Corner, Coral Ledge, Fish Factory, Jerry's Jelly, Small White Wall, Cabbage Patch, Barracuda Hole, Yellow Tunnel, and Korolevu Reef.

Of the dives listed only Rainbow's End and Korolevu Reef are beginner dive sites. The Zoo, Fingers, Great White Wall, Jack's Place and Barracuda Hole are advanced. The rest are intermediate to advanced. Most of the dives are live boat but not necessarily drift. We experienced a long calm dive at Cabbage Patch while on other dives we kicked across current for several minutes or more. In our videos of the Great White Wall, bubbles from divers in front of us hit our camera lens like horizontal sleet on a wind shield. We observed even the most seasoned divers succumb to sea sickness the first day or two of diving. Both on and off the water, the dive staff demonstrated their professionalism. Some of the staff have been diving the strait for more than 20 years and their experience is invaluable. **Click here** for more dive site information in Taveuni, Fiji Islands.

Diving the Somosomo Strait is exhilarating! SubaFit recommends advanced diving skills and a high level of physical fitness for this diving experience. Training for this excursion ideally starts a year in advance. However, if a diver exercises five days a week, reasonable preparation can be completed in three to four months.

“ *Cycling is an excellent form of exercise for divers preparing to dive in changing conditions and currents.* ”

Nearly an all-in-one workout, cycling is particularly well-suited to develop the fitness level recommended for diving in changing conditions, rough seas and currents. Much more than just exercise for the legs, cycling involves all of the muscles of the body along with mind-muscle training for efficient movement and all-important cardiorespiratory fitness for divers. Similar to diving, the torso is stabilizing the body while the legs are moving, and the arms are performing tasks.

Yes, it's true, fitness can be as easy as riding a bike. For most divers, the biggest challenge will be finding a comfortable seat. Definitely start with a padded seat and maybe padded shorts as well. Whether cycling indoors or outdoors, make sure the bike fits properly.

Outdoor cycling often begins at a bike shop where staff will assist new cyclists with proper fitting of a bike and help determine which bike is best for the type of riding that is planned. For example, dirt and trail riding is different than street cycling. Safety is most important when cycling outdoors. Practice on

neighborhood streets and bike paths away from traffic before venturing into busy commuting areas. Always wear a helmet regardless of the laws, and any other gear that protects from injury and the elements. Joining a cycling club is a good option where divers will find social support, learn from others, and find riding buddies.

Indoor cycling requires seat, tension and handle adjustments to achieve a good fit. A group cycling instructor can assist divers with proper set up. If the instructor does not offer to help, be sure to ask for assistance. Indoor cycling is choreographed and may be challenging for beginners. Initially, don't try to stay with the instructor. At first a good goal is to continue cycling at a comfortable tension for the entire class without stopping. Do this a few times before trying to adjust tension, stand up or cycle to a faster cadence. On indoor bikes the feet are almost always placed inside a pedal cage or clicked into the pedal with a cycling shoe. Different than outdoor riding where the terrain demands a response from the body, divers might unknowingly allow their legs to spin without engaging the muscles of the legs. It is important to ride with purpose. Push through the high stride and pull through the low stride putting reasonable effort into the workout. Remember, as with all new exercise activity there is a possibility of delayed onset muscle soreness. Divers may not know how sore they will be until 24 to 36 hours after exercise. It is important to monitor heart rate when cycling. Heart rate sensors are not typically built-in to group exercise bikes, so divers will want to purchase a heart rate monitor, or learn how to check their heart rate manually.

Another option are the exercise bikes found in most fitness centers and home gyms. A variety of models are available in upright and recumbent styles. Stationary bikes may not have as many adjustments, but a good set up is to adjust the seat so that when the pedal is fully extended divers have a slight bend in the knee. Exercise bikes usually have creature features such as television monitors, fitness programming, built in heart rate sensors, and plug-ins for portable music. **Stationary bikes** may be the equipment of choice for divers or be used to cross-train and/or prepare for indoor cycling classes and outdoor riding.

Last but not least are **cycling trainers** allowing divers to adapt outdoor bikes to a stationary training apparatus. Cycling trainers are an excellent option for outdoor riders during inclement weather and for those training for long road races such as 100-mile century rides.



Ride-Fit training videos bring an outdoor experience to indoor cycling for divers.

For divers who want that outdoor experience when training indoors, fellow scuba diver and videographer, Gary Hawkins developed a series of cycling training videos available at www.ride-fit.com.

The Ride Fit videos cover beginner through advanced levels allowing the user to experience a wide variety of workouts with differing benefits. For instance, "Fiesta Island Fun" incorporates the 70% and 80% training heart rate zones recommended for anyone looking to maintain a good level of general fitness. Divers benefit greatly by training in both zones in the same session and Ride Fit's Fiesta Island Fun title accomplishes just this.

"Three Times Up, Three Ways Down" is a great cycling workout for divers transitioning from foundational to endurance training. It is also ideal for fat burning cardio which, requires a longer aerobic exercise session. This video tour in the shadow of Mt. Baldy incorporates climbing intervals with periods of downhill recovery. Divers can train at their own fitness level and progress at an individual pace. In addition to the digital dashboard, divers may apply the BORG Rate of Perceived Exertion Scale (a subjective measure from 6 to 20 of how difficult exercise feels) in a range of 12 to 14 (moderate to somewhat hard) that translates well to moderate-intensity scuba diving activities. Pushing into the 14 to 16 (hard) range for short and well-tolerated bouts will help improve endurance and create fitness reserve for unexpected or more challenging scuba diving experiences. The music track is motivating and the lyrics meaningful.

Another of my Ride Fit favorites is the Advanced ride "Alpine Challenge". Users who wish to take their training to this level will master it with a goal of performing the entire ride without exceeding their 80% training heart rate zone. This intense climbing tour is an excellent test of a high level of endurance demonstrating good aerobic capacity of the heart and lungs, and efficient utilization of oxygen by the muscles.

The narrative instructions and coaching in all of the Ride Fit videos is particularly helpful and integrates without distraction. Cycling indoors is much different than riding on the road. As a training tool, Ride Fit videos also help prepare an individual for the elements of traffic, terrain and team riding before transitioning to outdoor cycling.