

# Fitness for Diving Around The World: Grand Turk

FLORIDA DIVER – APRIL 25, 2016

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Turks & Caicos Islands are nestled in the Atlantic Ocean at the southernmost tip of the Bahamas due north from the Dominican Republic. Consisting of two island groups, Turks and Caicos is separated by the 7,000-foot deep Turks Island Passage. There are more than 40 dive sites along the west edge of Grand Turk. Most of them begin in 25-to-30 feet above sand or reef and drop over the spectacular vertical wall. Visibility is stunning, reefs are lush with abundant larger than life marine life, conditions are mild-to-moderate and the water is warm. Storms rarely affect the island or diving. The year-round average temperatures range between 73 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit with ample bright sunshine.



Words & Photos by Gretchen M. Ashton, CFT, SFT, SFN, NBF

It is important to emphasize good hydration and protection from the sun in Grand Turk's tropical savannah climate. The Grand Turk Wall is just a 10-minute boat ride off the beach. The water is clear and visibility often exceeds 100 feet. Unique to some of the dive sites along the Grand Turk Wall is the waterfall of sand that can reduce visibility quickly during outgoing tides.

Unless traveling with a large group and other arrangements are made, diving is done in small groups of two to eight divers with one dive professional that usually serves double duty as the boat captain. Divers will experience back rolling from 25-foot skiffs and probably remove gear before climbing short boat ladders. Back rolling entry is easy, but the short ladders on the skiffs are not necessarily practical to climb wearing gear. Removing dive gear in the water, climbing the ladder and then pulling the gear in behind is an option when divers are the first to return back to the boat. If a diver or pro is already on the boat, divers will find themselves pushing their dive gear up from the bottom of the tank to assist the diver pulling from topside before boarding the boat themselves. A good overall fitness level is all that is needed for the consistent and moderate conditions of Grand Turk. Special focus on shoulder strength will prevent injury and help divers prepare for the logistics of handling gear.

## Seated Shoulder Press and Kneeling Shoulder Fly

For both exercises, contract the abdominal muscles, squeeze the buttocks and anchor the feet. Beginning with the elbows positioned at shoulder height, position the weight according to the respective exercise (press or fly) and raise the arms all the way up without locking out the elbows and repeat. When performing the Kneeling Shoulder Fly keep the arms in an oval or lobster claw shape. Remember to exhale while lifting and inhale while lowering the weight.



## Seated Shoulder Press and Kneeling Shoulder Fly

The Seated Shoulder Press and Kneeling Shoulder Fly require the diver to press weight over the head without the support of a chair or bench behind the back. Sitting or kneeling on the BOSU engages the abdominal muscles, spinal erectors, and



other assisting muscles to stabilize the body during the movement. Seated low to the ground with the legs out straight requires even greater overall muscle strength and good flexibility in the low back and hamstrings. Kneeling on the BOSU with a higher center of gravity calls for better balance.

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