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Scuba Fitness: Exercise for diving in Grand Cayman (Photos)



Split Stance Squat Starting Position (Gretchen M. Ashton, Photographer, Loren Kurz, Fitness Model)



Gretchen Ashton
Carlsbad Scuba Fitness Examiner

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On this third visit to the Cayman Islands we stayed at **Colbalt Coast Dive Resort** and dove with **DiveTech**. Arie and the staff at Cobalt Coast are warm and welcoming professionals providing clean and comfortable accommodations with impeccable customer service. We enjoyed the relaxing atmosphere and delicious healthy food choices. One of our menu favorites was the Jerk Chicken Caesar Salad. We ordered the dressing on the side and used little to none as the chicken was served hot and was very flavorful.

DiveTech found optimum ways to keep us diving even with a hurricane lurking on the horizon. DiveTech is definitely a teaching dive facility for all ages and we were impressed by the number of divers, the organization of both shop locations, and the qualifications and customer service of their instructors.

“ *The take-away "fitness for diving" message for the dive sites, conditions, facilities and procedures of this diving experience is an overall good level of fitness with emphasis on core and leg strength.* ”

The dive sites we explored were Dragon Hole, Hammerhead Hole, Eagle's Nest, Paradise Reef, Oro Verde, Leslie's Curl, Mary's Garden, Blue Peter, Cobalt Coast Reef, Lemon Wall, Spanish Anchor, Sand Hole, Conch Point, Hopp's Wall, Lighthouse Point Reef, Roundabout, Spanish Bay, Ocean Point, Kittiwaki, Tarpon Ledge, Castle, Orange Canyon, Round Rock and Doc Poulson.

While the diving was easy-to-moderate, there were occasions when swimming against current on the surface was necessary before descending. This procedure was practiced by staff so that divers were descending over the reef rather than the deep blue.

Divers (with assistance from very attentive staff) carried dive gear to and from the boat every day. Sometimes divers were transported to nearby docks via van to shorten the boat ride, accommodate ocean conditions and scheduling, and to keep divers safer and more comfortable. Depending on the conditions of the day and which dock was used to board the boat, along with the frequency of afternoon shore diving available at both Cobalt Coast and the sister property, Lighthouse Point, there was a lot of gear lugging. Divers should be able to comfortably manage their own gear in any and all conditions.

The Split Stance Squat is a great exercise for strengthening the legs and stabilizing the core. Maintaining balance and coordination during this exercise engages the abdominals, back, hips, glutes, legs and mind.

Beginners can hold onto a chair or railing to practice this exercise. Initially, body weight may be enough of a challenge. In time

adding additional weight and standing free from support moves this exercise to its advanced form. This exercise is NOT performed as a lunge. Knee complications that exclude lunges may not a problem with this exercise when performed correctly.

Form and Breathing: Stand in a forward-to-back split stance as shown. Feet should be hip width apart as if walking in an extended stride. Contract your abdominals and inhale while lowering the body by bending the knees to 90°. From the squat position, contract all the muscles of the lower body and the torso and exhale while returning to the starting position. In particular, the glutes (buttocks) extend the hip joint while the quadriceps extend the knee joint.

Repetitions: Depending on your individual strength and endurance perform the exercise between 10 and 25 repetitions with each leg. Repeat two-to-four times on each leg.

Precautions: Keep the front knee behind the toes, ideally over the ankle. Do not lock-out the knees or look down. The back knee (as much as possible) should align directly below the hip allowing for a 90° bend at the ankle. Work to adjust your stance so that the back knee aligns directly below the hip with as close to a right angle at the ankle as possible. If you find your position is not perfect, a slight adjustment of the upper body may bring you into alignment. If it doesn't, return to the starting position and adjust the starting stance front-to-back until you find the best alignment.

Exercise is not recommended 24 hours before or after scuba diving.