

FITDIVER®

Performance Above and Below

A publication of ScubaFit® by Gretchen M. Ashton, CFT, SFT, SFN, NBFE



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FitDiver® Abs Mobile App



All scuba divers have wash board abs, some just have a load or two of laundry resting on top. Whether they are visible or not, abdominals are essential in supporting the back and stabilizing the body through complex movements associated with scuba diving. Without question, a balanced abdominal strengthening program is an important component of scuba fitness and should be developed in conjunction with back strengthening and flexibility early in an exercise program. . .

A Treasured Chest Mobile App



Navigating the waters of fitness for scuba diving may seem daunting however,

these tried and true exercises for the major muscles of the upper body are as certain as the tides to develop a Treasured Chest. The most recognized chest muscles, Pectoralis Major and Pectoralis Minor, are located in front of the ribcage, add another layer of protection to the chest cavity, and are responsible for most of the movements of the shoulders required for scuba diving activities. . .

Gretchen M. Ashton, CFT, SFT, SFN, NBFE



Gretchen is registered with the National Board of Fitness Examiners. An advanced and Nitrox certified diver, International Sports Sciences Association Elite Trainer, personal association, specialist in fitness therapy, specialist in fitness nutrition, and world champion athlete. Gretchen developed ScubaFit® and the comprehensive FitDiver® program. Gretchen is a co-author of the ScubaFit® Diver Specialty Course and is an Expert Speaker for Los Angeles County Scuba Advanced Diver Program and Underwater Instructor Certification Course. She is the Fitness Editor for California Diver Magazine, a contributor to X-RAY MAG, and Scuba Sport Magazine, has been published in Alert Diver United States and Asia-Pacific, and Divetime.com, is an author at ScubaBoard.com, and is the Scuba Fitness Examiner at Examiner.com. Gretchen has appeared on Scuba Radio, presented at the Scuba Show, and has been featured in the President's Council of Physical Fitness and Sports newsletter for inspiring and innovative accomplishments in fitness, and on the Margaritaville Key West website culinary column. As an athlete she set 21 World and American records and was the second woman inducted into the AAU Power Lifting Hall of Fame.

Healthy Holiday Eating Tips for Divers

"Eat your main meal in the same time as one dive (about an hour) and take a surface interval (of several hours) before dessert."



Think before you indulge. Holiday celebrations are not an excuse to dive in with abandon. Even one high fat meal can cause dramatic increases in blood pressure and increase cardiorespiratory stress associated with both physical and mental tasks, which contribute to heart disease over time. The caloric content of a traditional Thanksgiving meal is estimated between 3,000 and 7,000 calories. The resulting high blood lipid levels, high blood sugar levels, and high blood alcohol content may take from three to 10 hours for the body to metabolize. Give your body time to metabolize any over-indulgences before diving. Avoid eating high fat and high sugar foods at the same time. Even when eating below daily caloric needs, the stress of this combination on your body leads to high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease and obesity. Considering these are the most frequently reported medical conditions by divers, think before you eat on Thanksgiving Day.

Choose smaller portions. Reduce portions to one-fourth cup (about the size of the round face of your dive computer). By the time you select mashed potatoes, stuffing, yams, rolls, butter, turkey, ham, gravy, green beans and cranberry, you will be eating three cups of food. Most portions are easily double or triple this size in addition to alcoholic beverages and desserts. Many divers overeat everyday and during the holidays are likely to gain an average of a pound per week. This weight gain is often around the waist, hips and buttocks distorting efficient contours for streamlined movement in the water, increasing drag and requiring more effort by the diver. Studies have also shown greater potential for more vertical and dangerous ascent rates with larger buoyancy compensation devices, more likely to be worn by larger divers. Higher body fat percentages are also considered a factor for higher risk of decompression sickness.

Exercise before you eat.

Go for a walk, join in the family flag football game, or hit the gym early in the day. Cardiorespiratory fitness is the highest priority for divers. Recent studies indicate exercising at a comfortable pace for as little as 45 minutes counteracts the negative effects of a high fat meal and actually improves artery function. Further, when exercise is combined with low fat meals, artery function is improved beyond what is was before the meal for a net positive healthy result.

Prepare and bring healthy food. Switching from saturated butter and fats to unsaturated oils is a significant improvement toward a healthy lifestyle. Saturated fats will decrease your HDL (good)cholesterol while unsaturated fats actually may increase your HDL (good)cholesterol. There are many "cooking light" recipes for traditional holiday dishes. If your meal is potluck, prepare and bring a healthy dish. Fresh green salads, wild and brown rice, steamed vegetables and fruit salads are all healthy options. Spend no more than one dive (about an hour) eating your main meal and take a surface interval (of several hours) before dessert. Select one dessert. Avoid snacking during the hours between. If you must, eat from the veggie tray (avoid the cream cheese dips - try the salsa on veggies).

Eat the plan. Just like your dive planning and training, safekeeping your body during the holidays includes looking out for yourself and your dinner buddy by preparing in advance, applying what you know and making good decisions. Surround yourself with others who have successful health and fitness programs or decide in advance as a family or group of friends to practice healthy eating this holiday season.

Aerobic Exercise Improves Mental Performance for Divers

The "runner's high," a "feel better" sensation often experienced by long-distance runners, is generally attributed to high levels of endorphins in the the brain. Researchers have known for some time that exercise increases endorphin production. As a result, in addition to improving the efficiency of the heart, lungs and vascular system, aerobic training can actually produce an anti-depressant type of effect including improvements in emotional and intellectual health.



Aerobic exercise improves mood stability often allowing those under a doctor's care to reduce anti-depressant and anxiety medications. Improvements in self-esteem, increased confidence, and a more positive outlook for the future are also benefits of the effects of physical activity on brain chemistry.



Studies indicate that aerobic exercise improves mental acuity resulting in better concentration, enhanced ability to direct thoughts, and improved memory, all important mental performance activities for divers. Further neurophysiological advantages include a reduction in the symptoms of diseases such as Parkinson's, improved sleep patterns, and diminishing the craving responses during smoking cessation.

Cardiorespiratory fitness is essential for scuba diving. Incorporating aerobic exercise in the diver's daily routine is definitely not a "no-brainer" but it isn't difficult to achieve. The results of the above-mentioned studies were accomplished in only five weeks with 30 to 60 minutes of exercise three times a week.

Examples of aerobic exercise are walking, jogging, running, swimming, rowing, cycling, jumping rope, aerobics classes, and dancing. Fitness centers and home gyms provide equipment such as treadmills, stair climbers, ellipticals and exercise bikes. Aerobic exercise may also be performed outdoors almost anywhere and can be a family activity, social time for moms while children are at school, or tranquil time alone.

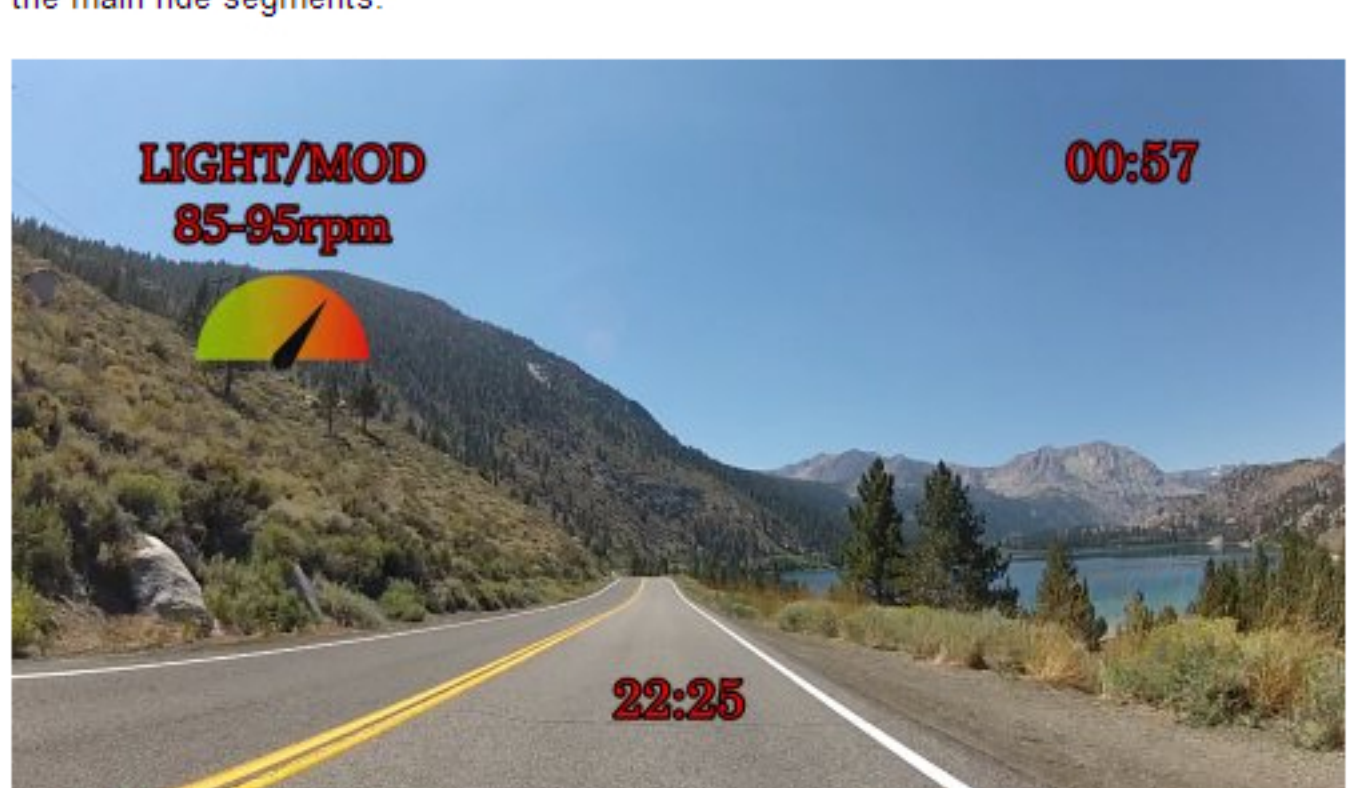
FitDiver® Favos

New High Cadence Interval Training Workout for Cyclists from Ride Fit™



Fellow diver Gary Hawkins has developed a series of training videos for cyclists. "High Cadence Interval Training" is his latest edition to the Ride Fit™ collection. Here is the recent press release:

Ride Fit's thirteenth indoor cycle training workout puts the focus on high-cadence, lighter-resistance tempo riding. This is the first Ride Fit™ title to focus exclusively on these RPMs and is designed to encourage users to strive for the higher cadence levels used by the pros, and that have been shown to lower fatigue and therefore improve overall performance. Set to great interval training music from BodyRocker Fitness, this workout is approximately 31 minutes in duration and features "rolling-road" footage for the main ride segments.



A trailer for this new workout can be seen at http://youtu.be/ZUJdg_0WAv-8 or by clicking on the image above. More information, including training tips on high cadence riding, is available in our latest blog article, "High Cadence Riding With Pick It Up!" A great addition to your Ride Fit™ training collection, Pick It Up! is [available by download for \\$8.99 MSRP](#). A DVD version is planned for early next year.

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a person who strives and achieves the required level of fitness in order to stay underwater for long periods of time and adapt to the elements presented.

ScubaFit®

Bringing fitness to life!

FitDiver® is a publication of ScubaFit® by Gretchen M. Ashton, CFT, SFT, SFN, NBFE

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