

Workouts for Surfers

How to improve your surfing when there is no swell

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Wouldn't you like to be able to surf harder and longer, get more barrels, bust bigger airs and surf with more style? And wouldn't you like to be able to accomplish this without even getting wet?

Surfing has reached a new level of professionalism in recent years, with pros opting to train harder and smarter in an effort to increase their performance out in the waves.

Mick Fanning's rise to the top was driven by his dedicated approach to his fitness regime after a debilitating hamstring injury. Taj Burrow has personal trainer (Bra Boy - John Gannon) flown around on tour to keep him in peak physical condition at all times. Obviously fitness training for surfing is becoming more and more important to the top professionals.

So what can the rest of us mere mortals do to improve our surfing ability whilst stuck on dry land?

The secret lies in functional training.

What is functional training?

Most fitness programs created by fitness trainers are designed for bodybuilders not athletes. Generally these programs are generic in nature and do not tailor to the specific needs of the sport.

Functional training is working out using exercises that have movements similar to that used in the sport, in this case, surfing. It is basically training for a specific purpose.

From a performance perspective, functional training overloads your body whilst you are doing similar movements to that you would use whilst out in the surf. Your body then adapts to this overload and the result is that these movements are easier to perform whilst surfing.

There are many movements your body undertakes whilst surfing including paddling, pushing, squatting and twisting just to name a few. Therefore it is important any functional training program incorporates core strength, balance, upper body strength and lower body strength.

The following functional exercises are designed specifically to improve your surfing ability. All you need is a stability ball and a basketball or weight plate.

Russian Twist

- This exercise will work your core muscles in a twisting motion.
- Lie on a stability ball with your feet on the floor and knees at right angles.
- Hold the basketball above your head and roll to the side until the tip of your shoulder is on the ball. Repeat on the other side.
- Do 8 repetitions each side.
- To increase the intensity, do the exercise faster (with good form) or use a weight plate or medicine ball instead of a basketball.



Split Squat Twist

- This exercise will improve your leg strength, balance, and core strength.
- Start in a lunge position but with one foot in front of the other.
- Keeping your body in an upright position, lower your back knee towards the ground stopping just short of touching, whilst rotating the ball to one side
- Your front knee should end up directly over your ankle.
- Push back up to the start position and repeat, but this time rotate to the opposite side.
- Do 4 rotations each side and then swap legs.
- To increase the intensity, use a weight plate or medicine ball instead of a basketball.



Stability Ball Balance Chop

- This exercise will train your balance and core strength.
- Kneel on the ball whilst holding a ball next to your hip.
- Lift the ball above your opposite shoulder whilst maintaining your balance.
- Repeat the exercise 8 times per side.
- To increase the intensity, use a weight plate or medicine ball instead of a basketball.



Stability Ball Push-Up

- This exercise will improve your upper body strength and balance.
- Perform a push-up with your hands on a stability ball.
- Make sure you brace your abdominals and keep your body straight.
- To make it harder, place your feet on a bench.
- Do as many repetitions as possible.



Incorporating functional exercises into your training schedule means your body will be able to withstand the extreme physical conditions that it is exposed to whilst you are surfing. The result for you – surfing will be easier, you will be able to go harder and longer, recover faster, perform better tricks and basically have more fun!

For a complete functional training program designed specifically for surfers, which includes training for core strength, balance, cardiovascular fitness, upper & lower body strength and flexibility, visit www.totalsurfingfitness.com.

Clayton Beatty is the fitness expert behind TotalSurfingFitness.com, a website dedicated to functional training for surfers.

Clayton holds a BSc Degree in Human Movement, is a Certified Fitness Trainer and grew up surfing the Margaret River region in Western Australia. If you would like to learn more visit his website at www.totalsurfingfitness.com.