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# Surfing: Cost, Learning Skills And Personality

## WHAT IS SURFING?

Surfing is the sport of riding waves in an upright or prone position. Surfers catch ocean, river, lake, or man-made waves, and glide across the surface of the water until the wave breaks and loses its energy. The ultimate goal of surfing is to ride and progress on the unbroken part of the wave using piece of equipment called a surfboard.

## WHERE CAN YOU SURF?

Some places to surf include rivers, lakes and manmade surf machines, such as the “Flowrider” located at many amusement parks. But, the main place for surfing it at the beach. However, there are particular beaches that are more suitable for surfing than others.

- A favourable wind and swell window
- Plenty of long rideable wave faces
- A comfortable paddling channel
- Consistency all year round
- A long stretch of beach
- Uncrowded surf zone
- Warm air and water temperatures
- Shark-free area
- Clean water

## WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO SURF?

Dawn and dusk are the absolute best times to surf, due to many reasons. Some factors include:

- First of all, the chances of your chosen surf area being crowd are super low. You most likely would have the whole beach to yourself, plus maybe a few other surfers getting in early too. The levels of stress that are prevalent in the peak will be considerably insignificant.
- At dawn and dusk, when the temperature of the water equals the temperature of the surface of the earth, the majority of spots privilege solely offshore winds, or simply no wind at all. Wind can play a major role in the quality of surf during your surf session.
- During the day, both onshore and offshore temperatures will diverge, and the onshore winds will dominate. As a result of this, there will be heavier closeouts, choppy waters and fast-breaking waves. Therefore; calm and offshore winds are more common at dawn and dusk.
- The morning sun is incredibly beneficial for the body if only exposed to in small amounts, because the early morning rays will provide you with multiple health benefits. These include Vitamin D, detoxification, mood elevation via serotonin, immunity and digestion improvements, and effective protection against multiple skin problems. During the day (especially the warmer months) the sun can be too harmful on the skin, no matter how

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much protection in worn.

- In addition to all of this, getting up early in the morning to surf is a great way to start off a day. Similarly, finishing of a day in the beautiful surf is incredibly relaxing and rewarding.

## **IS SURFING EXPENSIVE?**

Surfing is relatively inexpensive, mostly due to the fact that, if you have a beach right near you and don't require lessons, surfing is pretty much free. The most expensive part of surfing is required when a surfer is just starting out, as it is a requirement to either buy, or hire a board. Surf boards can vary greatly in price, difficulty of use and styles. An average surfboard could cost anywhere between \$500 and \$1000 depending on the quality, and whether it is a brand name. There are other things that a surfer may want to buy to accompany them in their surfing, such as a wetsuit, surfboard leash, surfboard wax, and a surfboard traction pad (to keep your board grippy). Although none of those things are absolutely essential, they most certainly can come in extremely handy when it comes to surfing. Another expense that must be taken into consideration is whether lessons are a requirement. When starting out, surfing can be very tricking and frustrating, or even dangerous if it is not taken about in a proper manner. Taking lessons can be a great way to ensure a surfer's safety and enjoyment whilst in the water. One other issue for many living in inland Australia, is travel. Travel to and from a place where surfing is accessible can be extremely expensive, and should most definitely be taken into consideration for those not living close to the water.

## **HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO LEARN?**

Learning the very basics such as how to stand up on a longboard and ride a foamy (white water wave) in the shallow beach break is quite easy and uncomplicated. You can most likely do it on your first ever surd session. However, improving real surfing skills can take months of practice, with a lot of things to enhance and correct. Becoming an advanced surfer that is able to ride serious waves in different breaks and under different ocean conditions, can take many, many years. Some ways to improve surfing faster than most, is through not only practicing in the water, but out too. Some things to do when not at the beach include:

- Swimming
- Push-ups
- Jumping rope

Exercises such as these will keep your body in shape when you are not at the beach, they will strengthen your surfing muscles and keep you in optimal surfing shape even when the waves are flat.

## **HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE OUT OF A DAY?**

Surfing can be over and done with fairly quickly. Majority of surfers enjoy waking up bright and early, and setting out for a morning surf. This could take anywhere from half an hour to two hours, depending on how close you are located to the beach, and your personal preference on how long you would like to surf for. There is a rule-of-thumb that each surf session must involve at least 3 waves ridden, and then the session can be over. This is more of a general rule for those who have set a goal for themselves to surf every day, even when they don't want to,

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such as in the winter months. It is a good guide for if you are not in the mood for surfing; just take half an hour or less out of your day to ride three waves to keep you fit, healthy and motivated.

On the other hand, some could go out surfing for hours on end, or even make a day of it. Getting together with a group of surf friends and taking some lunch along is quite common for those who want to spend a long day out on the water. This scenario is quite common when surfers want to try out a new surf spot, and want to spend quite some time to get to know the area.

## **WHAT ARE THE PHYSICAL SKILLS REQUIRED FOR SURFING?**

- Tolerance to extreme temperatures - because surfing is an outdoor sport, the weather can be very unpredictable. During winter the water will be very cold, and during the summer, the sun will be very hot and glary.
- Swimming - Surfers must be strong swimmers, as the ocean is unpredictable and dangerous if not dealt with carefully. If a surfer is to lose their board, they must be able to make it competently back to the beach.
- Agility – surfing is a motion sport, and you should be able to jump fast from a prone to an upright position, squat and rotate your hips with absolute ease.
- Balance - the key to surfing. Not only are you standing on a small surfboard, but at the same time that board is moving through the ever-changing ocean. Every wave is different, and you must deal with the changing conditions every time. A strong core and strong legs are required.
- Flexibility - essential for surfers. To get up on your feet every time takes quite some bending of your body. Also, when you fall off the board, the currents will churn you around uncontrollably, and it is a must that your body will be able to withstand all of these uncomfortable motions.
- Strength - surfers need a lot of upper body strength. Strong shoulders, strong arms and good firm chest muscles are necessary for all of the paddling. Also a strong and healthy body will help you to recover faster from any battles with the waves. Having good strength will also make you less prone to injury, and have more stamina.
- Endurance - to paddle constantly through white-water, big waves and strong currents takes endurance. You have to be willing to push through pain and exhaustion if you want to keep riding waves all day. Determination and endurance go hand in hand and are key skills in becoming a great surfer. This can also be an interpersonal skill, as it required a lot of effort to be motivated to go for a surf some days, not only physically, but mentally too.

## **WHAT ARE THE INTERPERSONAL SKILLS REQUIRED FOR SURFING?**

- Determination - Getting pounded wave by wave can really test your motivation when you begin to surf. If you are not determined to keep trying, surfing can be a very frustrating experience. It's a difficult sport so don't expect to be a professional when you're only just starting. Because with practice and determination eventually you will start seeing progress, and it will be extremely rewarding.
- Bravery – surfing is not a sport for the light-hearted. It can be quite frightening,

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especially when one is just starting out. The idea of being under the control of a dangerous, raging ocean, is one thing. The through of what could lie within the ocean is another.

- Patience - surfing is not something easy to achieve. It is not a sport that the 'rules' can be learnt within a couple of minutes. Surfing takes skill and many, many years of practice to master. It is very tedious, but if you have enough patience, surfing can be lots of fun.
- Focus – when surfing, one cannot just doze off and let the board take them. Surfing takes a lot of focus and thinking. A surfer must always be watching out for the next wave, rips and other surfers, all whilst maintaining their balance and any skills they are undertaking. You always have to be on the ball.
- Drive – one must have a passion and a drive towards the sport of surfing, as it can be both very emotionally and physically draining. Getting up early, braving through all types of weather, maintaining your board and other equipment, keeping a healthy lifestyle and you body in shape, getting to the beach and taking on injuries are all factors that could stop you from wanting to surf, but you have to just keep on going, no matter what.
- Common sense – when surfing, you must know right from wrong, when something is unsafe, and when your body has had enough. You need to be unsure that you never put yourself, or any others in danger. Surfing can be lots of fun, but must be taken seriously, or else it can result in serious injury, or even death for either yourself or others.

## WHO IS SURFING SUITABLE FOR?

Although surfing sounds like a very difficult sport, it can actually be done by a lot of people. No matter, age gender or abilities. There are lots of ways to do surfing for those that do not have full functionality.

There are so many different types of disabilities that can still surf and compete at a high level, this style of surfing is called adaptive surfing. Like regular surfing, adaptive surfing involves the surfer paddling out and riding a wave towards the shore. Adaptive surfing can be done wherever there are suitable waves, just like regular surfing, it is mainly in the ocean, however can also be done in lakes, river and through artificial waves. Adaptive surfing allows for modifications to be made to the surfboard so that it can be properly used and safe for the surfer.

Disabilities and conditions can range from joint problems, paraplegia, intellectual and neurological impairments, and limb difference. Surfing has many benefits for those with a disability, as an amputee and member of the Limbs 4 Life community, who is paralysed in one arm and an above-knee amputee, stated that “The advantage of being an amputee and surfing is that once you are in the water your disability disappears as you are weightless. Being in the water is good for the soul and it’s wonderful to smell the water because you are in it rather than only smelling it from the beach.”

Not only can those with different levels of functionality surf, but anyone of any age too. You are never too young or too old to surf. As long as you have good swimming skills, surfing could be for you! Technically, there is no reason why an 80-year-old man or woman can't paddle for a wave, catch it, and pop up easily. Old age shouldn't hinder one from learning how to surf. Surfing for the elderly can be good to keep them fit and healthy, so they can have something to look forward to, and to socialise.

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For younger children, surfing can be introduced at a very young age. For children less than 2, a relationship can be created with water, to encourage and ready them for surfing in the future. When a child reaches between 4 and 7 years old, games can be introduced to developed motor skills such as running or jumping, which can be beneficial so that they are ready for the amount of movement that comes with surfing. Children this age could start to learn to balance on a surfboard, and even be guided through shallow waters. From this age onwards, the technique of surfing begins to be introduced and will be polished progressively.

Surfing is a sport that anyone can try. As long as you can swim well and can endure the physical demands that the sport requires, yes you can. Starting these skills early can be extremely rewarded, as a child can start to develop skills that other children might not until they are much older, such as balance, determination, and motor skills.

Surfing is most definitely not a sport for only one gender, in fact, it is probably one of the most gender-neutral sports available in Australia. Both men and woman alike can get out on the surf and have some fun, to keep fit and healthy.

## **WHAT ARE SOME BARRIERS OF PARTICIPATION IN SURFING?**

There are quite a few barriers when it comes to surfing, including weather conditions, proximity to a beach or other surfing destination and whether there is someone that can go along with you. Always ensuring that someone comes along with you when surfing is extremely important, as surfing can be very dangerous if not treated with extreme caution.

Weather, especially along the coast can be extremely unpredictable. It can sometimes change within minutes. Make sure to always check the local weather before heading out to surf. In addition to this, most major surf spots will have a daily surf report, so you know what you are heading into before you get there. If the weather does change dangerously fast, and you are unprepared, unsure you get to safety as soon as possible. Another alternative is taking advantage of the wild weather, if you are experienced enough. Sometimes practicing in the extreme weather can help you become a far better surfer than those who only practice on the calm days.

Another barrier for many Australians is how far they live away from the beach. Many aspiring surfers live too far away from the beach to enjoy the sport of surfing. For some living inland, the only way to surf is to travel to the ocean, which can be very tiring. Another alternative for those more serious about the sport, is to move closer to the beach, but this can be extremely expensive and challenging for some to do, and is only for those who have an extreme passion for the sport. Some inlanders will be fortunate enough to have a river, lake, or manmade surfer machine that they can practice on whilst away from the water, but this barrier is one of the hardest to overcome.