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MISSION STATEMENT

September 2012 | feelhappiness.com | Mikey D | Exercise

7 Unique Ways of Getting Exercise at the Beach

Ahhh, the beach.

As a New Jersey native who lived in a lake community, beaches have always been a significant part of my life.

But until I moved to Netanya, I had never taken advantage of one of the greatest benefits that the beach has to offer: it's a great spot for exercising!

Now, I've played my share of beach volleyball in my day. And for sure, that's a great way of getting some exercise at the beach…but there is so much more.

Why You Should Get Exercise At The Beach

The beach offers several advantages to someone seeking exercise.

Before getting into the specifics, you should know that working out at the beach just feels awesome.

Obviously that is partly a matter of personal preference, but having beautiful outdoor scenery while you work out makes it a much more pleasurable experience.

From a more objective standpoint, there are a few other advantages.

1. Extra Resistance: When working out on the sand, each exercise will be more challenging. The sand "gives" a little, which adds resistance to your exercise, increasing the intensity. You will not be able to do as many reps on the sand as you could on a mat in your gym.

2. Burn More Calories: Because of the extra resistance, working out in the sand will burn more calories than working out on a hard surface. Trying to burn fat? Do your jog in the sand and it will be far more effective.

3. Easier On Your Joints: The harder the surface you run on, the more damage your knees will take. Sand helps to absorb some of the shock from your running.

Risks Of Working Out On The Beach

That being said, there are some risks to working out on the beach.

1. Chance of injury: In addition to the normal risks of exercise, the sand poses an additional challenge. Because it is less stable, you are more likely to twist or sprain your ankles while moving around on the sand.

2. Sunburn: At least where I live, temperatures are regularly in the 90's Fahrenheit between 10 A.M. and 4 P.M. The sun is absolutely brutal, and pale people such as myself should be particularly sure to wear sunscreen. But really, even if you are darker, sunscreen is still important.

3. Dehydration: If you are used to working out in a gym, there may be a water fountain there, so you don't need to bring your own fluids. But if you go to the beach, you must be sure to have water to drink while you are there. This is particularly important considering the heat, which can leave you drenched in sweat.

Mitigating The Risks

Although there are risks, there are

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Mitigating The Risks

Although there are risks, there are some simple ways to reduce the risk as much as possible.

The first factor you should consider is the time of day you are going to the beach. This of course depends on what part of the world you are in and the season, but certain hours will be "safer" for you.

In Netanya, going either before 8 A.M. or after sundown is the best bet. The beach is less crowded, and the temperature is

reasonable with a less brutal sun.

Another factor is your warm up and cool down routines. You should be doing this no matter where you work out, but it is of particular importance on an unstable surface like sand.

When you start working out on sand, you need to get used to it. Don't immediately do anything too intense. You can exercise on the wet sand as a way to ease into it, or wear shoes for the first several times.

Ways To Get Exercise At The Beach

Finally, the good stuff!

There are a ton of different ways to exercise on the beach, and plenty more than I can possibly mention here. Feel free to do whatever interests you!

1. Swimming. This is an obvious one. If you are at the beach, you can head into the water and swim some laps. This can either be your whole workout (swimming is a great full body exercise) or you can swim in between your sets of other exercises.

Floating around won't cut it; you must actually be swimming for this to count!

2. Surfing. You can't do this at every beach, but if you can, surfing can be both fun and a good workout. Personally, I've never done it, but it's on my to do list while I'm in Netanya; there are some great waves here.

3. Volleyball/Frisbee/Paddleball. Everyone loves a good game of beach volleyball. But there are plenty of other games you can play on the beach that will keep you active. Just make sure you aren't standing around doing nothing. Run after that disc, dive for that volleyball, etc. Be a gym class hero.

4. Pick up seashells. If you walk along the beach and repeatedly bend down to pick up seashells, you can make a decent workout out of it. It's basically like doing a bunch of squats.

5. Use buckets of sand as dumbbells. If you want to do some resistance training, buckets filled with sand can make great weights, and you can quickly adjust the weight for whatever exercise you may be doing.

6. Run on the sand. This is a common way to take advantage of the sand. It's incredibly challenging, so don't expect to maintain the same pace you would run on concrete.

7. Bodyweight exercises. This is what I've been doing primarily for the past two weeks. Try some push ups, sit ups, planks, or body squats. There are plenty of bodyweight exercises you can use, so be creative in designing your workouts. A couple of times I've done burpee workouts, and that has left me barely able to walk!

Conclusion

The beach is great, and if you have one available, you are doing yourself a disservice by not taking advantage of it.

Trying to choose between lounging at the beach and getting some exercise? Do both at the same time!