



ED.— ALWAYS CONSULT A PHYSICIAN FIRST BEFORE BEGINNING ANY EXERCISE OR FITNESS PROGRAM.

# Getting Fit & Looking Good

Text and photos courtesy of Gretchen M. Ashton, CFT, SFT, SFN, NBFE. Founder of ScubaFit®

**While not all divers are genetically predisposed for the ‘Baywatch look’, most divers and water sports enthusiasts want to present their personal best in a wetsuit, swimsuit, shorts or tanks. As the weather warms from winter to spring and we get ready to show a little more skin, getting outdoors for a total body workout is rejuvenating and provides great advantages for divers. It is best to stay in shape all year, but for divers who have an off-season, commencing training at least 12 weeks prior to scuba diving creates a good fitness-for-diving foundation. Training the entire body for at least 12 weeks, along with good nutrition, is also an opportunity for divers to simultaneously sculpt a shapely physique.**

This workout is designed to strengthen and condition the entire body with five unique exercise combinations. Particular

focus is on the lower body performing one task while the upper body does something else and the torso provides stability. This workout improves physical ability and helps to reduce risk of injury for divers at the surface, getting in and out of the water, donning gear and moving around on boats and through surf.

## Scuba diving benefits

- Treading water and rough seas conditions
- Climbing up and down boat ladders from the water or between decks
- Maneuvering around mooring chains and lines during ascent, descent and waiting to board
- Holding onto a diver in an emergency and for rescue activities
- Assisting another diver with gear
- Holding onto gear while moving through surf
- Donning and removing gear and fins

- Pulling wetsuits on and off

## Tips for Success

- Practice each movement separately before combining the upper body and lower body exercises.
- Perform one static and one dynamic movement when first combining upper and lower body exercises. (For example, stay in the squat position and continue rowing for one minute.)
- Begin with 10 to 15 repetitions of each exercise and work up to one minute.
- Never hold your breath (even if you don't get the breathing right at first).
- Always contract the abdominal muscles (pull in the belly button).
- Practice the exercises without weights.
- Eat well, drink plenty of water and get proper rest.
- Wear proper clothing, footwear and sunscreen.

**Precautions:** This workout is designed for healthy shoulders, knees and backs. In any case, DO NOT lift heavy weights for shoulder movements and follow proper form using both the descriptions and pictures.

## The Workout

**Exercise:** Triceps Extension with Heel Press Abdominal Crunch

**Major Muscles:** Triceps, Quadriceps, Abdominals

Begin in the starting position as shown. Press the lower back into the mat and pull in on the belly button contacting the abdominals. Inhale deeply through the nose. While exhaling through the mouth, extend the elbows and knees until the hands and feet are above the shoulders and hips. Inhale and

exhale again, while contracting the abdominals enough to slightly raise the hips and buttocks off the floor and pressing the heels upward. Inhale while simultaneously bending the knees and

elbows returning to the starting position. Repeat for one minute. Note: This leg extension movement also actively stretches the hamstrings and lower back.

**Exercise:** Chest Fly with Bridge  
**Major Muscles:** Chest, Glutes, Hamstrings, Lower Back

Begin in the chest fly with bridge starting position as shown. Pull in on the belly button contracting the abdominals. Squeeze the glutes (buttocks). Inhale deeply through the nose while simultaneously lowering the arms out to the side and the hips toward the mat, until the elbows and buttocks are about an inch off the mat. Exhale through the mouth while contracting the abdominals and raising the hips and arms, returning to the chest fly with bridge starting position. Repeat for one minute. Note: Proper form for the chest fly portion of this movement at the bottom is for the hands to be outside the elbows with the arms slightly curved. Raise the arms as if reaching around a barrel bringing the hands together at the top.

Chest Fly with Bridge starting position (right); Chest Fly with Bridge ending position (lower right)



Triceps Extension with Heel Press Abs ending position

Triceps Extension with Heel Press Abs starting position



Row with Close Stance Squat starting position (below); Row with Close Stance Squat ending position (bottom left)



**Exercise:** Row with Squat  
**Major Muscles:** Legs, Glutes, Back, Biceps  
Begin by wrapping one or more exercise bands around a tree, pole or piece of exercise equipment. Stand with the feet slightly in front of the hips with arms extended holding onto the handles of the exercise bands as shown. Notice the hip, knee and elbow joints are slightly flexed and the shoulders are slightly retracted to resist the bands. Pull in on the belly button

Stationary Lunge with Biceps Curl starting position (right); Stationary Lunge with Biceps Curl ending position (lower right)



onto the back of a park bench to master the stationary lunge before progressing to the combination.

**Exercise:** Wide Stance Squat with Overhead Shoulder Fly  
**Major Muscles:** Legs, Shoulders, Inner Thighs (Adductors), Glutes, Calves

Stand in a wide leg stance. Position arms out to the side at shoulder height with palms up. Before starting the movement, look down briefly to check that your hips, knees and toes are aligned. Inhale deeply through the nose while reaching

contracting the abdominals. Inhale deeply through the nose while simultaneously sitting back into a squat position and pulling on the exercise bands. Bend the knee, hip and elbow joints until right angles are achieved at each joint and the ankles. The knees should always be behind the toes (ideally over the ankle). The elbows stay close to the body alongside the waist. Exhale through the mouth while simultaneously contracting the glutes, and extending the knee, hip and elbow joints returning to the standing position. Repeat for one minute.

**Exercise:** Stationary Lunge with Biceps Curl  
**Major Muscles:** Legs, Biceps

Stand in an extended stride position with feet about hip width apart, one foot in front and one foot behind the body as shown. Arms are positioned alongside the body as shown. Pull in on the belly button contracting the abdominals and extending the spine to stand tall. Inhale deeply through the nose while simultaneously lowering the body and raising the weights. Bend the knee, hip, ankle and elbow joints as close as possible to right angles. This is the equivalent of a single-leg squat and the front knee should always be behind the toes (ideally over the ankle). The elbows stay close to the body alongside the waist. Exhale through the mouth while simultaneously contracting the glutes, and extending the knee, hip, elbows and ankle joints returning to the starting position. Repeat for one minute in this position, then switch legs front-to-back and repeat for another minute. **Precaution:** Never continue to perform this exercise with your front knee in front of your shoe laces or your hips behind your back knee. STOP and reposition. This exercise can be challenging for some. To begin, you may eliminate the biceps curl and/or the weight, and hold

Wide Stance Squat with Overhead Fly starting position (right); Wide Stance Squat with Overhead Fly ending position, front and side view (lower right)

back with the bottom and simultaneously raising arms in the upward direction of choice. In the lower position, the knee, hip and ankle joints are as close as possible to right angles, as shown. At the bottom of the squat, squeeze your glutes (buttocks). Reverse the direction of the squat and arms while exhaling through the mouth on the way up. Repeat for one minute. Note: Do not lock out your knees at the top of the range of motion. Always look up (never look down) when performing a squat. Sometimes it is helpful to imagine a chair or bench that is too far behind you and reach for it when performing the squat. Keep your body weight distributed evenly through all the muscles of the body, keep your abdominal muscles contracted.

*Fitness model Loren Kurz is a long-time friend, fitness professional and business associate. She has been weight training for 25 years, runs marathons and a variety of other road races, played competitive women's soccer for many years, and has been a challenger on American Gladiator.*

*Gretchen M. Ashton is registered with the National Board of Fitness Examiners. An advanced diver, International Sports Sciences Association Elite Trainer, and world champion athlete, Ashton developed the ScubaFit® program and the comprehensive FitDiver® program, which includes the first mobile app for scuba diver fitness. Ashton is the co-author of the PADI ScubaFit Diver Distinctive Specialty course. For more information, visit: [Scubafit.com](http://Scubafit.com)*



Lure

