

## Want A Better Life? Try Surfing!

From youthful days spent in the “aloha” atmosphere of Oahu, Hawaii, to the cold, snowy winter white of Dover, Delaware, I dreamed of surfing.

I started surfing at age ten in beautiful Ewa Beach in Oahu, Hawaii. My dad, a career Air Force sergeant, transferred to Hickham AFB in 1964. Opting to live off-base, we rented a bungalow just a stone’s throw from the surf where there’s a clear view of Diamond Head across the aqua-green waters. The waves at Ewa were just the right size for teaching a tan, tow-headed boy how to surf.

My first board was huge, and heavy -- an old-fashioned wooden one a friendly neighbor made for me. That board built muscles, coordination and an endurance that lasted a lifetime! Those days on Ewa Beach instilled a lifelong love of the ocean and surfing.

After almost four years in Hawaii, we transferred to Dover, Delaware, and surfing took a back seat to school, Varsity football, eventually marriage, a career in teaching and coaching golf. But the ocean and its wonders were never far from my thoughts. I knew I’d get back to my “first loves” -- surfing and the ocean.

As a high school Biology teacher in southern California, many of my students are surfers and our discussions often turn to the colorful fish, playful dolphins and other interesting sea creatures seen while surfing. My students’ adventures made me think. Why couldn’t I start surfing again? I knew I was out of shape and probably couldn’t get past the first set of waves, but I decided this was a way to re-capture my youth, get fit and find that feeling of oneness with nature again. I uncovered an old surfboard stuck away in the garage, grabbed my sunscreen and off I went. I haven’t looked back since.

Years have passed and still I surf -- off the cliffs of Huntington Beach and “The Point” at San Onofre, down the coast in San Diego, and further down the coast in Los Cabos, Mexico, at Acapulquito and Cerritos. My new-found surfing friends, Tommy Two Tone, Mustache Bob and Architect Joe -- all part of my 6 a.m. “dawn patrol” three hour surf sessions -- and I enjoy the camaraderie that comes with the likes of middle-age men finding joy in riding the waves together. The surfing excitement spills over as we grab a coffee at Starbuck’s and review the day’s rides. We plan global surfing excursions to ride secluded new waves in distant lands. There we will share our ocean adventure with exotic sea creatures and experience glorious sunrises, midnight surf escapades and once again discover our “first loves”.

The surfing lifestyle has brought wholeness to my spirit and health to my body. I’m alive in the water, paddling my board, feeling the sun on my back and the water’s mist in my face. My life’s cares are left far behind on the shifting sands. Because of surfing, life is good.