



FULL SPECTRUM FITNESS: Are we amphibiously fit?

By Frank DiMeo

<http://mysite.verizon.net/res8kp13/crossfitgulfcoast/>

For a couple of years I lived on the island of Oahu, though being in the military, I didn't live on the base. I had an apartment on the North Shore not too far from Sunset Beach and Waiamea Bay. I watched the locals in my neighborhood surf, dive for lobster, or paddle regularly. One of my neighbors did the annual race from Oahu to Molokai, and was one really fit guy. I never heard any mention of weight training for this event, but he sure paddled a lot. This event is **a grueling 41-mile open water race** between these two islands. Check out <http://www.ohcra.com/molokaihoe/molokaihoe.htm> for more details.

That made a definite impact on my outlook about fitness. Now, years later back on the "mainland" I've got a young man training for BUD/S (where those hoping to enter the Navy SEALs go) at my gym. In addition to training several CrossFit workouts each, he swims 2 to 3 miles, 5 days a week and competes regularly.

Watching this guy get stronger and stronger, and his swim times get faster and faster, is very rewarding to me as a trainer. It is also very humbling to see this level of fitness.

Needless to say, after watching Michael Phelps sweep the Gold at the Beijing Olympics, I was getting very interested in the benefits of swimming again.

I love to do weight training, and I believe in lifting as heavy as possible; however,

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how would I do in the water? It's been several decades since I swam competitively, though living in Florida on the Gulf of Mexico with a beach just minutes from my house, I am in the water often. I don't consider that training, it's usually kore goofing off and relaxing.

Recently, I was on vacation and took a road trip to the Carolinas. I did some body-weight workouts during that time, not to get too lazy on vacation.

The last day of the trip we had a really nice pool where we were staying and my young, energetic wife wanted to swim some laps before we left. I joined her at the pool and did some easy laps of the breast stroke, but soon decided to do some of the strokes I used to race years ago. I did some freestyle and backstroke and it went well. The technique came back quickly, and I felt very relaxed with those strokes.

Something inside me was drawing me to try the one that had always kicked my butt severely, the butterfly. I knew I had to try it! The first lap was not too bad, so I tried several more and was amazed that it went as good as it did. I was making laps on one breath, and though it was not an Olympic size pool, it was really cool to know I could still do that after several decades of being away from it.

The next day I didn't have any unusual amounts of soreness or fatigue, and this showed me that there was a good "carry-over" effect from my CrossFit training.

I know many people don't live near a beach, but swimming pools are easy to find. So why not challenge yourself to some amphibious fitness?

You might be surprised at how good you do. Go on, get in the water!

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