

Surfs up!

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Riding the waves can be the thrill of a lifetime. But what does it take to become a surfer?

If you have ever dreamt about incredibly big seas with huge powerful waves crashing onto sandy beaches, then you should definitely think about learning to surf. It's the most exciting watersport there is. Serious surfers must be very brave, love adventure and have lots of energy. Once they've experienced the excitement of a ride on top of the waves, they never want to stop.

### **1**

Surfers say they feel it's the only place to be. Many travel around the world searching for the perfect wave, moving from one surf festival to another and checking weather forecasts to see where the really exciting waves are expected next. Some even carry pagers which beep when there are weather reports of perfect conditions. A surfer's greatest disappointment would be missing the opportunity to surf in the best weather conditions.

### **2**

Hawaii is where the sport began - the place which most surfers see as their "true home". They love nature and the excitement you get from the deep waters. Enormous waves crash along mile after mile of beautiful sand, and every surfer dreams of experiencing surfing in Maui or Oahu. Other great surfing locations include Australia, the west coast of the U.S., the Caribbean, Brazil, Japan, Hong Kong, South Africa, the Canary Islands, and Cornwall. Experienced surfers are always in search of the best waves in some totally unspoilt paradise that hardly anyone has heard of.

### **3**

It takes time for a beginner to learn the technique, but during a long hot summer, who minds practising? The professionals, of course, are in the sea every day. Then come back onto the beach to do some exercises with weights. You need to be a strong swimmer with good balance and plenty of courage to be an expert surfer.

### **4**

You can surf almost anywhere in any weather if you are wearing a wet suit. All you need to do then is choose

a surfboard and you're ready to go - hopefully into big waves that are warm, with an experienced teacher to lead you. You don't need to wear a wet suit in summer, but many surfers keep them on all the time since they can protect you from the hot sun as well as from cold water.

### **5**

It can take a few weeks or it can take a whole summer for you to learn to catch a wave at the right moment, stand up on your board and stay there. It's an amazing feeling when you look down and see your feet on the board and realise you are finally standing up on the sea, even if you aren't very steady. Professional surfers look as if they learned to surf as soon as they could walk. For example, Shane Powell, an Australian professional, watched videos of Australian surfing heroes like Peter Townsend, Barton Lynch and Tom Carroll as he was growing up. He says, "As a boy I'd watch those surfers and just imagine myself riding the waves." Powell seems to move over the sea without any difficulty. He first practised on small waves, but clearly had talent. By the age of 17 he was touring with the world's best surfers, and now, at 23, he practises every day and an even younger generation of surfers study videos of him in action.

### **6**

Simply watching great surfers will make you want to try the sport. If you do try it, you'll find muscles you never knew you had; you may begin to think you might never get it right, but you'll have a lot of fun.

- A — Finding the waves
- B — Surfers love the crowds
- C – Surfing is addictive
- D — Little equipment and a good trainer
- E — Never easy but always enjoyable
- F — The international sport
- G – Learning from previous generations
- H – Two essentials: strength and fearlessness