Fitness On Board

While on a dive vaction, the key to improve your dives is keeping a constant level of fitness and flexibility. The following exercises can be easily repeated while on board on a daily basis, without increasing the risk of DCS.

Posture Alert

First of all, ensure your posture is right. Begin by bringing your shoulders up toward your ears, then drop them down and back: this will help aligning your back.

Each time you sit, make sure to briefly tighten your adbominal muscles: this practice will soon become a good daily habit.

Small spaces, big results!

Stretching and yoga don't need a lot of space to be practiced, but mental predisposition. Avoid getting caught in the daily routine and take some time for your body with the following:

- **Stretching and Lunges (fig. 1 -2)**

Lie on your back and reach way up over your head while pointing your toes; hold for 20-30 seconds. Then roll over to your stomach, press your hands onto the floor beneath your shoulders while keeping your hips in contact with the ground. Breathe deeply and stretch whatever area feels tight.

- "**Upward Dog" (fig. 3)**

1. Lie prone on the floor. Stretch your legs back, with the tops of your feet on the floor. Bend your elbows and spread your palms on the floor beside your waist so that your forearms are perpendicular to the floor.

2. Inhale and press your inner hands firmly into the floor and slightly back, as if you were trying to push yourself forward along the floor. Then straighten your arms and simultaneously lift your torso up and your legs a few inches off the floor on an inhalation. Keep the thighs firm and slightly turned inward, the arms firm and turned out so the elbow creases face forward.

3. Press the tailbone toward the pubis and lift the pubis toward the navel. Narrow the hip points. Firm but don't harden the buttocks.

4. Firm the shoulder blades against the back and puff the side ribs forward. Lift through the top of the sternum but avoid pushing the front ribs forward, which only hardens the lower back. Look straight ahead or tip the head back slightly; take care not to compress the back of the neck and harden the throat.

- **"Downward Dog" (fig. 4)**

1. Come onto the floor on your hands and knees. Set your knees directly below your hips and your hands slightly forward of your shoulders. Spread your palms, index fingers parallel or slightly turned out, and turn your toes under.

2. Exhale and lift your knees away from the floor. At first keep the knees slightly bent and the heels lifted away from the floor. Lengthen your tailbone away from the back of your pelvis and press it lightly toward the pubis. Against this resistance, lift the sitting bones toward the sky, and from your inner ankles draw the inner legs up into the groins.

3. With an exhalation, push your top thighs back and stretch your heels onto or down toward the floor. Straighten your knees but be sure not to lock them. Firm the outer thighs and roll the upper thighs inward slightly. Narrow the front of the pelvis.

4. Firm the outer arms and press the bases of the index fingers into the floor. From these two points lift along your inner arms from the wrists to the tops of the shoulders. Firm your shoulder blades against your back, then widen them and draw them toward the tailbone. Keep the head between the upper arms; don't let it hang.

5. Stay in this pose from 1 to 3 minutes. Then bend your knees to the floor with an exhalation and rest.

fig. 1 Stretching is a great use of a little time you may have in the mornings while on vacation
fig. 2 Lunges are an effective way to stretch the groin and thighs
fig. 3 If it is uncomfortable to rest on the tops of your feet, upward dog can be done with the toes curled under
fig. 4 When coming out of downward dog, stretch your calves by dropping each knee, one at the time.