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## Surf n Turf Safety Protocols

Although I strongly feel that the only safety protocol for surf n turfing on Saturdays is that you have a pair of testicles in your pants or some rock hard ovaries for the lady surf n' turfing, it is apparently very dangerous to go swimming in freezing water with no wetsuit for an extended period of time. Who knew?

(Sigh) Enough joking.

### **Hypothermia**

Hypothermia sets in whenever the body temperature dips below the required level to perform normal metabolism and body functions. The optimum temperature is 98.6°F so anything below that is technically hypothermia.

Symptoms are easy to remember. Just think of your umbles: stumbles, mumbles, fumbles, and grumbles. All show changes in motor coordination and levels of consciousness. It's similar to being drunk, just cheaper and less fun.

Here is a list of the four levels of hypothermia:

Mild Hypothermia - core temperature 98.6 - 96 degrees F

- Shivering - not under voluntary control
- Can't do complex motor functions (ice climbing or skiing) can still walk & talk
- Vasoconstriction to periphery

Moderate Hypothermia - core temperature 95 - 93 degrees F

- Dazed consciousness
- Loss of fine motor coordination - particularly in hands - can't zip up parka, due to restricted peripheral blood flow
- Slurred speech
- Violent shivering

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- Irrational behavior - Paradoxical Undressing - person starts to take off clothing, unaware s/he is cold
- "I don't care attitude" - flattened affect

Severe Hypothermia - core temperature 92 - 86 degrees and below (*immediately life threatening*)

- Shivering occurs in waves, violent then pause, pauses get longer until shivering finally ceases - because the heat output from burning glycogen in the muscles is not sufficient to counteract the continually dropping core temperature, the body shuts down on shivering to conserve glucose
- Person falls to the ground, can't walk, curls up into a fetal position to conserve heat
- Muscle rigidity develops - because peripheral blood flow is reduced and due to lactic acid and CO2 buildup in the muscles
- Skin is pale
- Pupils dilate
- Pulse rate decreases
- At 90 degrees the body tries to move into hibernation, shutting down all peripheral blood flow and reducing breathing rate and heart rate.
- At 86 degrees the body is in a state of "metabolic icebox." The person looks dead but is still alive.

Death from Hypothermia

- Breathing becomes erratic and very shallow
- Semi-conscious
- Cardiac arrhythmias develop, any sudden shock may set off Ventricular Fibrillation
- Heart stops, death

### Hypothermia in Water

The body loses heat to the water 30 times faster than to air and that is just while you are conserving heat and energy while floating. Heat loss and exhaustion increase by 30-50% while swimming. Cramp and hypothermia develop more quickly and cause the victim to become semi-conscious and drown.



But it's right there.

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## Safety Precautions and Procedures for Surf n Turf Saturdays

Before the trip to the beach, lake, wherever

- Buy some hand and feet warmers
- Bring warm clothes to change into after, especially a warm hat
- Make sure someone is coming to spot in case one of you start to die
- Find out the water temperature ahead of time to calculate how long it will take before your body shuts down and you die

Before the Swim

- Enjoy the run
- Take out your warm clothes so there can be a quick transition into them after
- Take out hand and feet warmers and activate them so they are nice and toasty when you get back
- Have a set length of time for your swim (should have done this already)
- Find your swim buddy
- Have emergency supplies available: heat blanket, dry towel and clothes, etc.
- Put on your wetsuit if you feel you have to. You'll lose some man points, but when in Rome.
- Ready?! Grow a pair and jump in.

In the Water

- If the water is cold enough (less than 65°F maybe), you are going to get a shock when you first get in
- Stay calm, the worst thing you can do is panic and start gasping for air. Inhaling cold water is fairly unpleasant.
- Know where your swim buddy is at all times. Stay with him or her.
- Keep an eye on your spotter on the beach. He or she controls the clock.
- In especially cold water (less than 60°F), sticking your head and face in the water is going to hurt like a bitch. You may have to revert to breast stroking (submerging your head only for a short period at a time) instead of freestyle swimming where your head is constantly partially submerged.
- Don't die.

After the Swim

- Dry off and get out of your wet clothes as soon as possible.
- Put your beanie or whatever you brought on.
- Put your dry clothes on.
- Grab the hand warmers and stick the feet warmers in your shoes.

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- Warm your extremities. The warm blood flowing from your chest to your arms and legs needs to stay warm for its return journey.
- Curl into the fetal position and hold yourself. You just got through Surf n Turf Saturdays!!!!!!!!!! Yay!

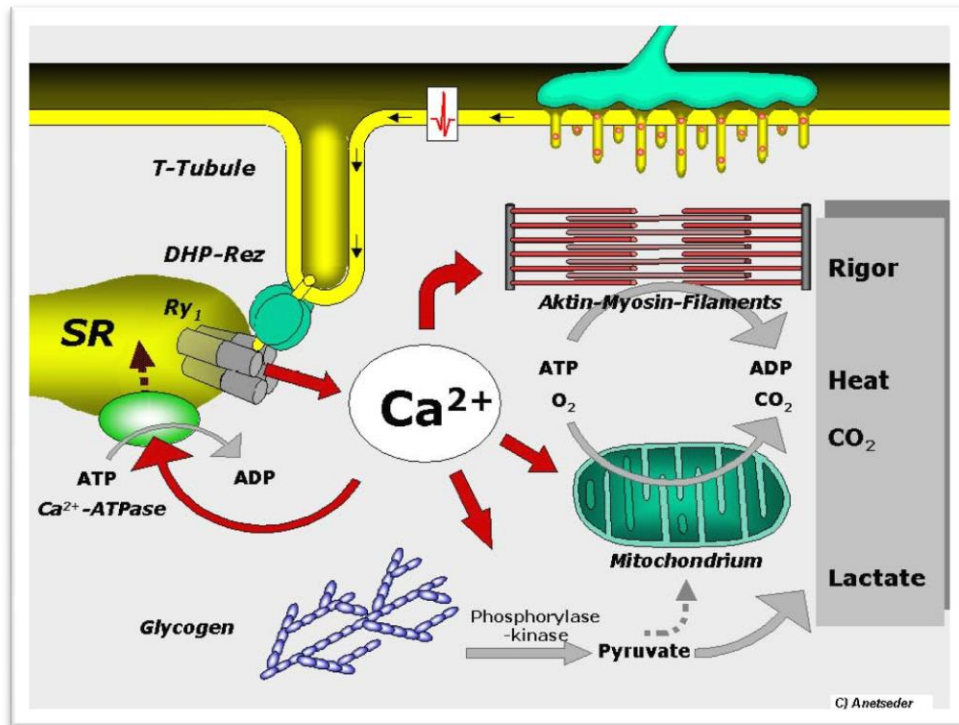
### Warm Water Swimming

So we have covered cold water swimming, which sucks, but what about warm water swimming. The Gulf down here in Florida is usually fairly warm from around March-ish into December. The water is only ball-nullifyingly cold for a few months unlike the rest of America where it's just downright cold all year, especially you, West Coast. During those 8-9 months, you may think you can stay in as long as you want. However, warm water hypothermia is a very real phenomenon.

If you really think about it, warm water is usually considered to be over 80°. I don't care what you say, 79° is cold. Anyway, our normal body temperature is 98.6° and like I said before, if our temperature drops below that; it's technically hypothermia. This can happen even in warm waters. Extended periods of time in any water that is below normal body temperature can result in hypothermia.

Warm water hypothermia can also be called silent hypothermia or ninja hypothermia as the symptoms do not set in immediately. "It is said that since being in warm water, (warm being below the body temperature) the drop in the core temperature may not be rapid enough to activate the body's thermo-regulator mechanism (shivering), the diver may still feel warm while his body is in fact cooling, which causes a sudden onset of severe hypothermia symptoms once the temperature falls beyond a certain level (aquareviews.net)." Just like if a ninja decided to kill you, you would never know until half your head slides off and your left eye is still blinking on the ground looking up at you.

Now, hypothermia is more of a concern for scuba divers, slow movers like Billy and treasure hunters like me. The real danger for the fish I am stuck swimming with is hyperthermia or overheating. We do sweat in water, but the sweat never gets a chance to evaporate to cool the body down. Just as vigorous exercise in the hot sun may give you heat exhaustion, vigorous swimming in warm water for an extended period of time will cause your body to overheat even though the water temp is cooler than your body temperature.



Hyperthermia, see?

Preventing hypothermia and hyperthermia in warm water is fairly simple. Just stop being a pussy. No, I joke, but seriously stop. For hypothermia in warm water, be sure to just remain vigilant to the signs of hypothermia. They are all listed above in the cold water section.

In the case of hyperthermia, although you do not feel thirsty surrounded by water, you must be sure to hydrate adequately. If you know you are going to swim aggressively in warm water, do not wear wetsuits or bodysuits. Be aware of the early warning signs of hyperthermia: nausea, dizziness, confusion, headaches and a rapid pulse. If you find yourself experiencing any of these symptoms, STOP SWIMMING, because it's really not that much fun anyway.

### Other Possible Dangers and Encounters

Some of this section pertains only to the gulf, but the majority could be applied anywhere as the ocean is full of animals. The exception may be Australia, though, as no list will prepare you for the horrors that are waiting to kill you in that water. But anyway, here are some pictures.

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## **Manatee**



**Manatees** are just fat and lazy, but will also scare the crap out of you if all you see is a giant dark mass in murky water.

## **Dolphin**



If you think dolphins are awesome, you need to do more research. They are easily the biggest assholes in the animal kingdom, besides humans, of course.

[Dolphins are Jerks](#)

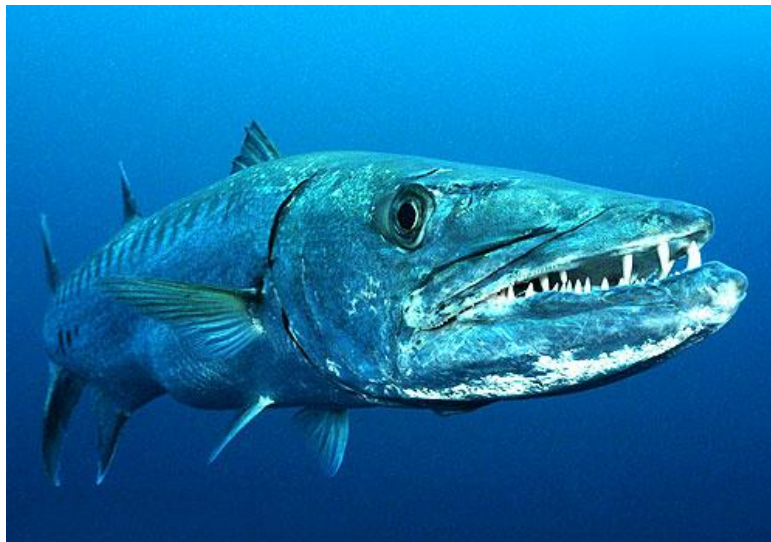
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## **Stingrays**



Stingrays are cool to watch, not so cool to step on. They are not scared to juke you with that giant barb they call a tail. It wouldn't be so bad if they hung out in the deeper water, but no, they like to hang right where you walk in the shallows. Remember to shuffle.

## **Barracuda**



Barracuda attacks are very rare. They are mostly scavengers, but they are fast and will scare the shit out of you when they blast by under you. Just look at his face.

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## **Bull Sharks**



There are a ton of shark species in the Gulf, but Bull Sharks are definitely the most dangerous shark around. They are able to tolerate any type of water and would be in your toilet if they were able. Keep an eye out for these bastards no matter where you are: Gulf of Mexico, Tampa Bay, Hillsborough River, Weeki Wachee, slip n slides, car wash, EVERYWHERE.

## **BullSharkBear**



There are only artists' renditions of the BullSharkBear as no one has ever lived to tell us what it really looks like.

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**Cthulhu**



You're screwed.