

[5 Reasons Why You Should Not Be Afraid of Sharks When Learning to Surf](#)

Surfing is one of the most enjoyable water sports. There is nothing more exhilarating for a surfer than to ride the biggest waves for the longest time. However, people who want to learn how to surf, draw back from the sports even before trying a session because of fear of sharks.

Indeed, sharks are seen as hostile predators of the sea. They are large, strong, have saw-like teeth and are fierce looking to some. In fact, of all the world's sea predators, sharks are the most feared. But sharks are perhaps also one of the most misunderstood predators. Although it is true that there had been victims of shark attacks, there are a lot of misconceptions about these creatures.

If you are a surfing greenhorn, do not give up the enjoyment of surfing just because of an irrational fear of sharks. Here are 5 reasons why a fear of sharks should never stop you from learning to surf.

1. Men and Women do not form part of a shark's diet.

There is no such thing as a man-eating shark. Men are not staple foods of sharks. Although their diet comprises of meat including sea turtles, fish, seals, sea lions and whales, humans are absolutely not on their menu. Because their system has a slow digestion process, sharks are very choosy of what they eat. Other than the fact that men and women are too bony for sharks tastes, these animals prefer rich fat-content meats to maintain its temperature and to give it more energy, such as those coming from seals and sea lions.

2. Most cases of shark attacks involve mistaken identity.

Data reveals that 90% or more of shark attacks are mistakes. From below the waters, sharks sometimes erroneously identify humans as their common food. That is why in most incidents, after biting a person, sharks let go of the victim.

Another characteristic of sharks that are unknown to most people is that they are very curious animals. Once they see something not common to them, they usually test bite it. The act of biting is equivalent to the human act of feeling something with the fingers. If that unfortunate thing is a man and woman, he can be injured but in any event, the shark always retreats.

3. Only a few sharks have the potential to be dangerous.

It is a wrong to generalize that all sharks are dangerous. Out of 360 species of sharks, only 4 of these are responsible for unprovoked attacks on humans: the Great White Shark, Bull Shark, Tiger Shark and Oceanic Whitetip Shark. There is no evidence implicating the other species in unprovoked attack incidents, making the vast majority of sharks harmless to humans.

There is also no truth to the fact that the larger the shark, the more dangerous it is. The largest sharks such as the Whale and Basking sharks are meek creatures that feed only on planktons as food.

4. The odds of being attacks by a shark very, very low.

Sharks rarely attack humans unless provoked, making the risks of being attacked very little. In fact, only 15% of the shark species frequent the shallow waters or the coast, where anyone may possibly encounter them. According to the International Shark Attack File, a persons odds of being attacked by a shark is only 1 in 11.15 million. The risk of dying is only 0 in 264.1 million. That is why, in majority of shark attacks, the victim always survives and gets to tell the tale.

5. The dangers of sharks as we know are exaggerated.

Sharks have been adjudged to be evil creatures by mere bad publicity. There are more animals that cause human deaths such as flies, mosquitoes and bees. Perhaps to be blamed for their bad identity is the media, which most likely sensationalizes every news of a shark attack. Other than the media, Hollywood must also take part of the blame for first giving the idea about the legend of a man-eating shark as portrayed in movies like Jaws.

Surf without fear. Leave your shark fear at shore

Surfing is a great sport, which makes the beach more special. Feeling the breeze of the wind on your face and the saltiness of the water against your skin while you sweep the waves with a surfing board is complete freedom. If you are a person interested in learning how to surf but later changed your

mind because of recent news of a shark attack or a scary shark movie, then that is very unfortunate.

Sharks should not be feared. There is no such thing as a perfect creature, sharks included. Sharks are part of nature's act to eliminate some members of certain species in order to balance nature. In Hawaii the locals even call these creatures "Aumakua" and they are believed to be guardians of the sea. In fact, it is the humankind who pose an unimaginably bigger threat to sharks as some of its species are already threatened and near extinction due to shark fishing and shark fin soup.

Sharks have ruled the sea for hundred millions of years even before people learned to surf. The ocean is big for both, for the former to roam and for the latter to surf. Now, you know that sharks do not relentlessly attack surfers and that sharks myths you know are not true, pick up that surfing board now and learn to ride the waves! What are you waiting for? Never let irrational fear get in the way of surfing because you do not know what you are missing.

About the Author

Me-Shell Mijangos (<http://www.swellwomen.com/founder/html>) a surfer who first began surfing at the age of 30. She is the founder of an all inclusive women's surf camp called [SwellWomen](#). Two years ago, she started SwellCo-ed, a Surf and Yoga Experience for women, men and couples. She hopes to surf with you in paradise soon! **Visit her SwellBlog!**

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