

SURF SURVIVAL

THE SURFER'S HEALTH HANDBOOK



FIRST AID



TRAVEL



DANGEROUS ANIMALS



FITNESS



BIG SURF



INJURY PREVENTION

Andrew Nathanson, MD

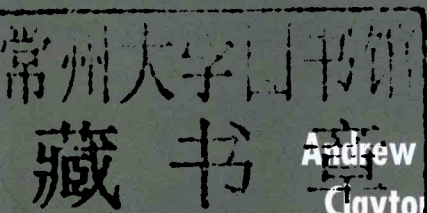
Clayton Everline, MD

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Foreword by Gerry Lopez

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SURF SURVIVAL

Advance Praise for *Surf Survival*

"Nobody has thought more, studied more, or cared more about the lifelong health and survival of surfers than Mark Renneker. *Surf Survival* brings together all that priceless knowledge, along with invaluable contributions from Nathanson and Everline, to make a must-have volume for every surfer everywhere. From surf-specific wilderness first aid—critical on any serious surf trip, anywhere on earth—to big-wave safety and even the very real scourge of surfer's ear, it's all here. Don't even think about it: if surfing plays any role in your life, you need this book."

—Daniel Duane, author of *Caught Inside,
A Surfer's Year on the California Coast*

"Good medicine, and a fun read in the bargain. Read this book and surf until you're 100."

—Matt Warshaw, author of *The History of Surfing*

"These days, 'playing hurt' among professional athletes is usually only after being worked over by a fleet of trainers, PT's, and docs. The most unbowed of bloodied athletes has to be surfers—ever self-sufficient, all about self-care. This book will help surfers do an even better job of taking care of themselves."

—Bruce Jenkins, sports writer with the *San Francisco Chronicle*,
and author of *North Shore Chronicles*

"This thorough, authoritative and oddly enjoyable book tells you not only how to treat surfing's myriad ailments, but also how to prevent them. For that reason alone, it might be the most important piece of surf literature you ever buy. All that, plus lots of photos of gnarly injuries."

—Steve Hawk, former editor of *Surfer* magazine

"I've read over 100 surfing-related books, but *Surf Survival* is the first one that I'll carry with me on every surf trip."

—Drew Sievers, *The Waterman's Library*

"Great book by great doctors. What a great combo: smart and hard-core surfers who care deeply about people and their health!"

—Greg Noll, Legendary big wave surfer,
author of *Da Bull, Life Over the Edge*

**To my father, who took me to the sea
To my mother, who encouraged my spirit of creativity
And to Cheryl and Nainoa, my two favorite surf
buddies. — Andrew**

**I would like to dedicate this book to my wife, Kristina,
for her support. — Clayton**

**To Jessica, and the legions of the jazzed.
— Mark**

The medical treatments provided herein are simply recommendations—your personal comfort level and level of training will ultimately determine your ability to put any of these suggestions into practice. No book can be a substitute for medical training and experience, and in no way is the information provided herein meant to be a substitute for consultation with a physician. We urge you to seek medical care, through traditional channels whenever possible. In an emergency, call 911 and go to an emergency department when in the United States. As much as possible, the recommendations in this book are evidence-based or based on guidelines from national organizations such as the American Red Cross, American Heart Association (AHA), and the Wilderness Medical Society (WMS). In addition to reading this book, we highly encourage you to further your medical education by taking hands-on courses in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and wilderness medicine so you can practice caring for simulated emergencies in a supervised setting.

Acknowledgments

Andrew Nathanson

I would like to thank Chris Vantilburg and Michael Jacobs from the Wilderness Medical Society for their encouragement and support for this book. Many thanks to illustrator Aria Marcos for putting up with innumerable revisions and e-mails, and to map designer and icon guy Carter Skemp for his great design concepts. Much gratitude to my little Brother Nicholas at Quiksilver, who has given me the thumbs-up on every request, and to Jason Murray at Quik who provided some super-high-quality photos. To David Young, a Kiwi whom I've never met, but who has documented the NZ surf scene like no other and was gracious enough to let us use his high-quality photos. To Mike Mello, Janette Baird, and the rest of the crew at the Injury Prevention Center at Rhode Island Hospital. A big aloha to Dave Skedeleski, owner and mastermind of SurfCo Hawaii who is one of the few manufacturers out there trying to make surfing a safer sport. Another big aloha to Jan and Donna Asuncion who always set us up with wave-riding vehicles on Oahu. To my surf gurus Kurt and Diane Vogelmann and, by default, their surf gurus Gene and Susan Bagley. And lastly a big thank-you to my co-authors. Clay, for getting the ball rolling, and Mark, for his wise counsel and superb editorial skills.

Clayton Everline

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Mark Renneker

To Jessica: sorry you had to be in New York City that week, but by going along with you, I got to meet Andrew Nathanson, and then Jennifer McCartney and the Skyhorse folks (who mightily impressed me by having already published six different zombie books, some of which I didn't yet own, and then gave us less than six months to write this book).

For helping pave the way for this book: Geoff Booth and Kevin Starr, ever stalwart surf docs.

For their careful review of select chapters: Dave Parmenter, Dick Underwood, Douglas Hetzler, and Mark Bracker.

For his offer to translate this book into Portuguese: Joel Steinman.

For his pioneering work on surfer's physiology: Brian J. Lowdon; he would be so proud to see how his field has grown!

Foreword

Surf to Surf Tomorrow

Some might think “Surf to Surf Tomorrow” is a cryptic coded message, like a secret handshake. Actually, it is nothing more than a simple way to deal with surfing in today’s world.

The Sport of Kings began centuries ago in Old Hawaii, and while it did favor the ali’i or royalty, it also was enjoyed immensely by the common folk. The modern age of surfing from the time of Duke Kahanamoku in the 1930s to the present day has seen an unprecedented growth in popularity. This has had the effect of increasing the number of surfers in the water to a point where tensions get hot and the thrill of surfing can get lost in the shuffle. For surfers who have been at it for a long time and remember better days, sometimes it just seems easier to give up and find another pastime.

To me, one of the biggest mistakes a surfer can make is to quit surfing. One of my main ground rules is to always surf to surf again tomorrow, no matter what that takes. As bad as today might seem, the sun will come up again tomorrow, we get to paddle back out once more, and we can start fresh all over.

Surf to Surf Tomorrow came from our early days at the surf camp in G-Land. Located on the southeastern tip of Java in the Blambangan Jungle Preserve, it was the most remote surf location anywhere. We boated in from the fishing village of Gradjagan, twelve miles across the bay to our makeshift camp that was built to last only that surf season. The monsoons and rainy season would begin late October or early November and that would be the end of our bamboo huts. The next April, we would rebuild everything. The fishing boat would drop us off on the beach with our supplies, turn around and leave us. There were no cell phones or any way to contact anyone. It was a camping trip; anything we needed, we had to bring with us, including our drinking and wash water. The surf was some of the most challenging I have ever found anywhere in Indonesia and, when the waves were big, it was hairy. None of us could afford to get hurt; we weren’t equipped to deal with injuries. Eventually we brought out suturing gear and I stitched up plenty of lacerations. Nowadays, there are staple guns, surgical super glue and other alternatives that *Surf Survival* will elaborate on in some

detail. But back then, the thought that a major injury could occur was really quite frightening.

That was where I would have a serious talk with anybody new we brought into the camp with us. The waves were great and inspired high performance, edge of the envelope surfing, but I would warn everyone to never surf here like there was no tomorrow. I would try to instill in everyone the lesson to always surf to surf again tomorrow.

In 1981, during a wipeout at the Pipeline, my single fin pierced my colon, causing a lot of internal bleeding. While recovering, I realized that had this injury occurred at the G-Land camp, chances are I wouldn't have made it.

Surf to surf tomorrow has become my mantra for more than just surfing. Metaphorically, it is about balance and pacing myself in all things. Some people like to go through life, splashing and making a lot of noise. For me, I like leaving as small a wake as possible.

—Gerry Lopez,
Bend, Oregon
February 28, 2011

Gerry Lopez is a legendary surfer and shaper, snowboard enthusiast, actor (co-starred in "Conan, the Barbarian"), and author (Surf is Where You Find It, Patagonia Books, 2008).

Introduction

For those who may think that a book on the health problems of surfers couldn't possibly be needed in this digital age, go ahead and "surf" the Internet for even the most basic surfer's medical problems: Surfer's Ear, Surfer's Eye and Skin problems, Surf Travel Medicine. Wikipedia has zip, except a short blurb on Surfer's Ear. Surfing web sites have a smattering of gobbledygook. Conventional medical sites? Hopeless. But worry not (Dick Dale guitar blast here!): Surf Docs TO THE RESCUE!

We three surfers who put this book together come from diverse surfing subcultures and medical backgrounds but share in common a longtime fascination with surf medicine. Mark, who hails from San Francisco, was the first of us surf docs to make the drop and continues to lead the charge as both a world-travelling big-wave kahuna and founder of the Surfer's Medical Association. Andrew is an ER doc at Brown with an academic interest in marine medicine who spends summer and winter plying the nooks and crannies of Rhode Island's fickle coastline in search of quality surf. And Clay, the young gun based in Hawaii, is a sports-medicine doc and fitness guru who trains some of the top names in the sport. As we've been out there for years getting battered ourselves by the surf, giving beachside consultations and providing care to legions of injured and ailing surfers, we've learned a thing or two along the way. This book is our tell-all on the subject.

The surfer's life is not without risks. Indeed, some would argue that the risks involved are part of the sport's allure. The rush we get from taking a late drop or pulling under a heavy lip is fueled in part by fear, fear that any misstep could lead to a serious thrashing (or worse). The vast majority of the time, we manage to emerge unscathed from even the ugliest wipeouts, but occasionally things don't turn out so well. Surf Survival was written to help you patch yourself back up when you get dinged, particularly when surfing in remote areas where medical care is nonexistent, and help may be hours or even days away.

However, the health issues faced by surfers aren't just limited to getting dragged over a coral reef or sliced open by a surfboard's fin. A lifetime of exposure to heat, cold, seawater, and sun can take its toll on a surfer's skin, eyes, and ears. Surf travel to the tropics opens up yet another medical can of worms, with the very real possibility of contracting life-threatening diseases such as malaria, dengue, and

yellow fever, never mind a gut-busting case of Montezuma's Revenge, which may not kill you, but will definitely put a serious downer on your trip.

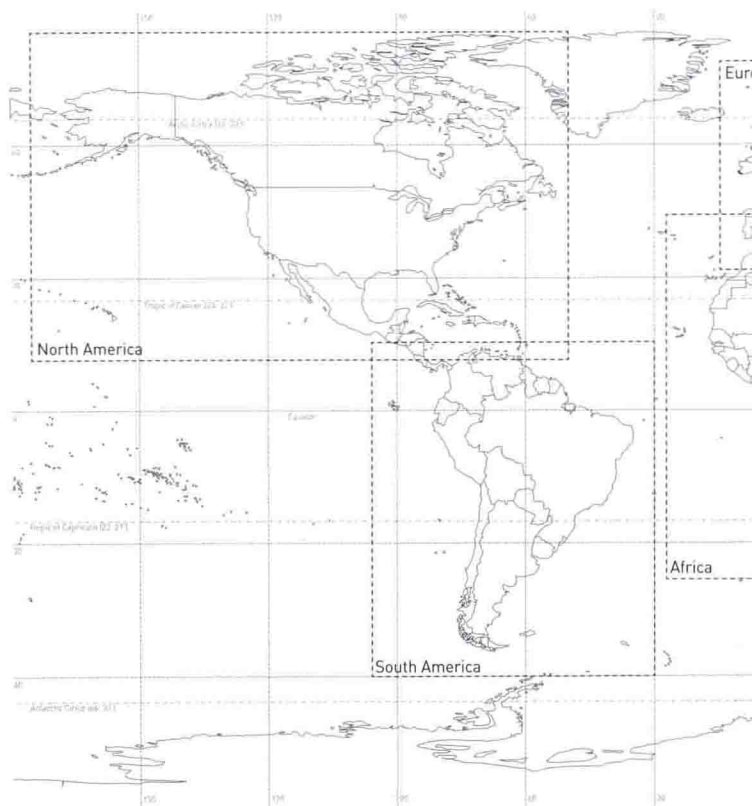
As surfers, we know that self-care is the goal. When far off the beaten path, self-care is often your only option. Say you're out in the middle of nowhere and you or one of your surf mates dislocates a shoulder, gets bitten by a sea snake, suffers a major wound, or spikes a high fever. Would you know what to do? This book offers practical advice on how to deal with the medical emergencies you are most likely to encounter as a surfer and shows you how to improvise medical care in wilderness settings by using everyday items you are likely to have with you when medical supplies are not available. We also lay down some guidelines to help you decide if the problem can be safely handled on scene or whether you should bail on the trip and seek help.

Even when modern medical care is available, most surfers discover early on that having to buckle down and go in to a doctor can be particularly discouraging, particularly if that doctor knows nothing about surfing. Regardless of whether they figure out what is wrong with you, the usual advice comes down to: "Stop surfing!" To cut down on these frustrations, we include in-depth discussions that cover a vast array of ailments that afflict surfers and tell you how you can treat the majority of these at home; for those issues that will require a doctor's care, you'll have the advantage of being well versed in the treatment options available.

Ultimately, this book was written by surfers for surfers to help encourage the long-standing surfing traditions of independence and self-sufficiency. We hope you keep it conveniently close to you in your wave pursuits, whether that be in the glove compartment of your car (or at least under the seat) or deep in the innards of your dry bag when you travel.

Cowabunga,

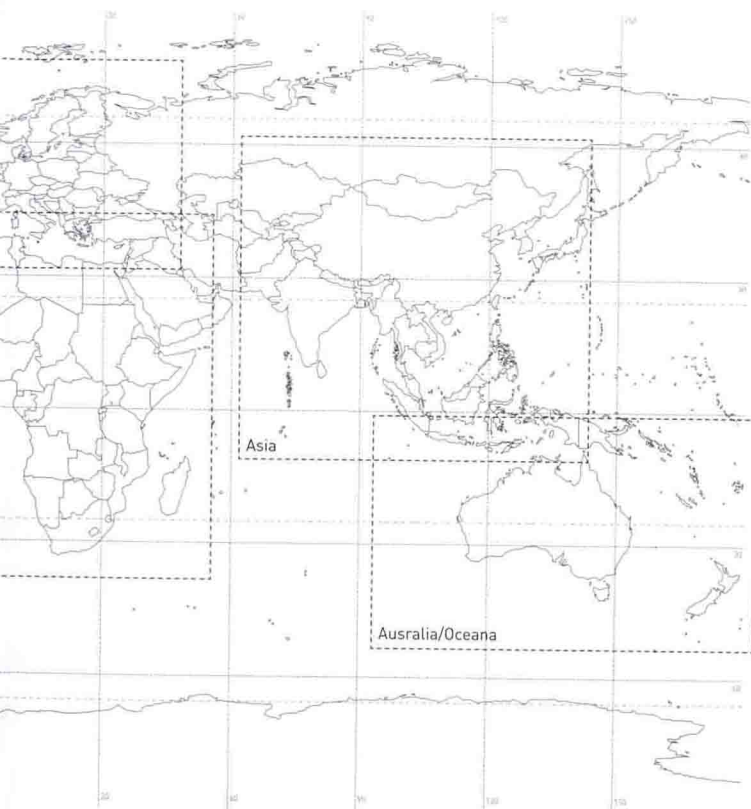
Andrew, Clay, and Mark



- I. North America
- II. South America
- III. Europe

- IV. Africa
- V. Asia
- VI. Australia/Oceania

INDEX TO SURFING RISKS WORLDWIDE



SHARK



LOCALISM



SEA SNAKE



HYPOTHERMIA



JELLYFISH



CRIME



POLLUTION



CORAL REEF



BEARS



SUN DANGER



POLITICAL
UNREST



LARGE SURF



STONEFISH



MALARIA



TSUNAMI



CROCODILE

HIGH

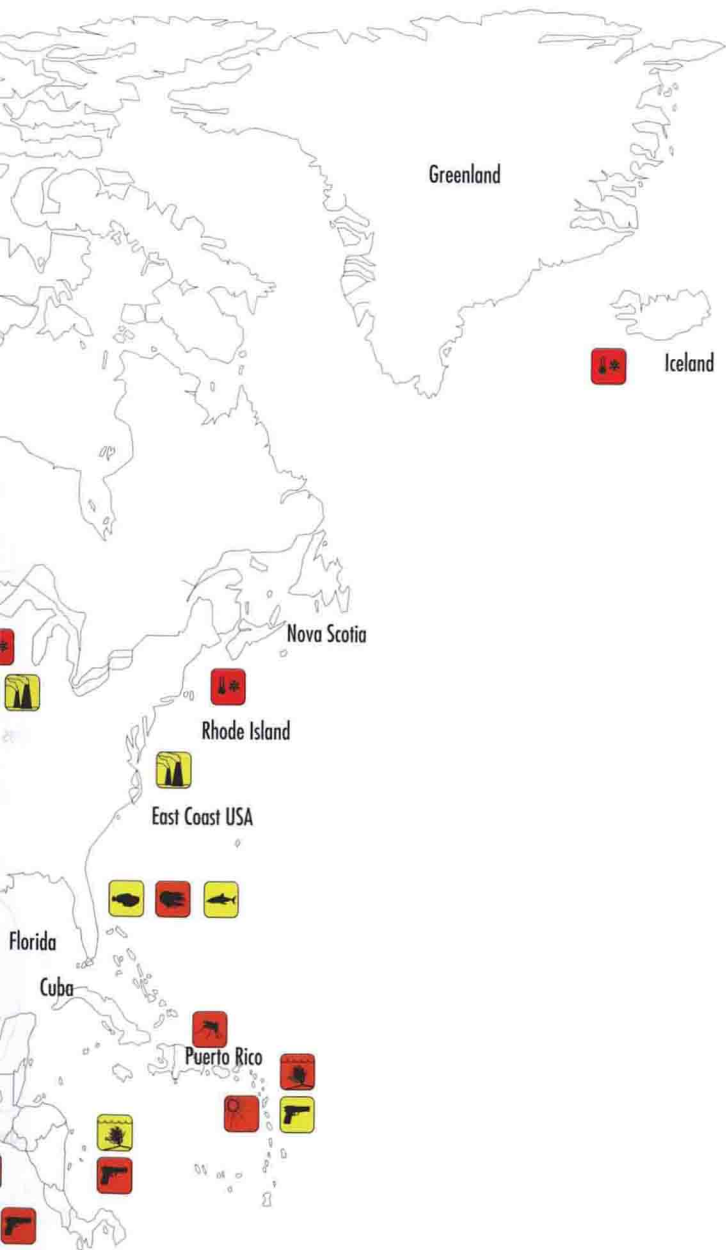


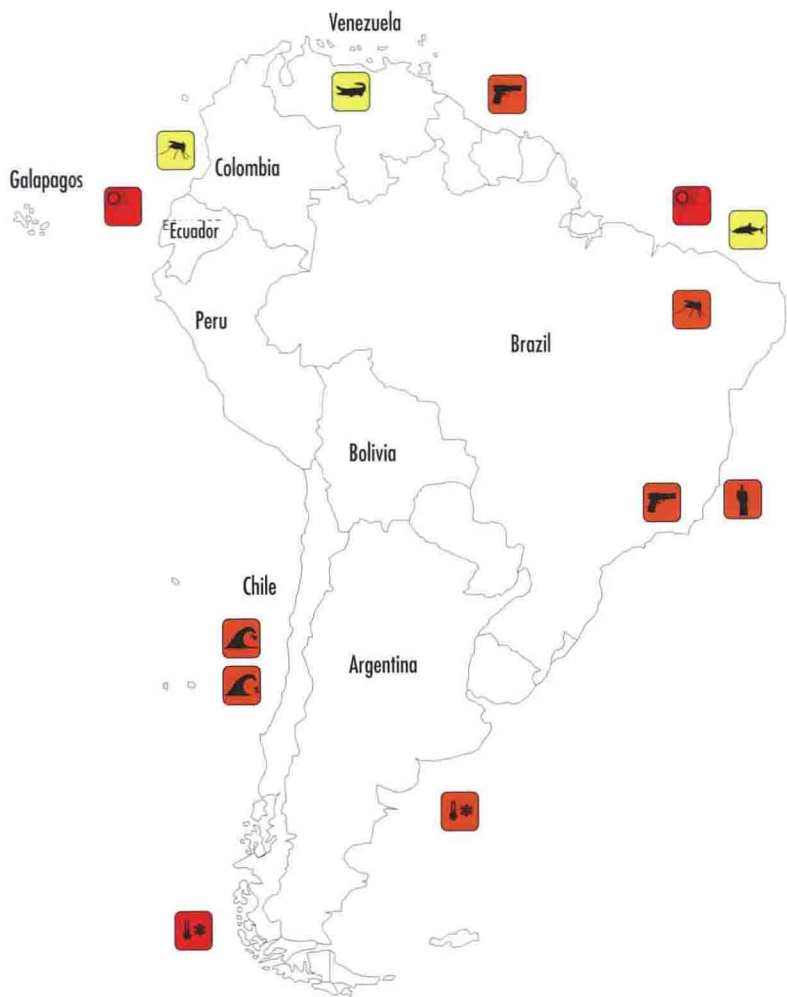
MEDIUM



LOW







SOUTH AMERICA