

# HEALTHY REEFS CHECKLIST FOR DIVERS

Divers are on the front lines of the fight to save coral reefs. As you get ready for your next underwater adventure, use these tips and be part of the effort to keep our reefs healthy and vibrant. We can save coral reefs if we act now.

## ✓ BEFORE YOU TRAVEL

- Book your diving excursions with reputable companies that respect coral reef health:
  - use a mooring system rather than anchors
  - adhere to a no-touch policy
- If you haven't been diving in a while, take a refresher course to feel comfortable in the water again.

## ✓ PRE-DIVE PREP

- Use reef safe sunscreen. Ideal: mineral based (titanium dioxide or zinc oxide), non-nano products; avoid products containing oxybenzone or octinoxate.
- Follow local protocols regarding gear sterilisation/sanitation to prevent spread of coral disease.
- Be informed about local laws in regards to diving practices.
- Pack a reusable water bottle.

## ✓ TOPSIDE TIPS

- Plan for correct amount of weight to maintain neutral buoyancy.
- Secure belongings and trash properly while on the boat.

## ✓ UNDERWATER

- At water entry, conduct a neutral buoyancy check at the surface.
- Maintain proper trim on your dive - you should be streamlined in the water with all accessories tucked in. This helps prevent stirring up of sand, silt and delicate marine life AND allows for a more enjoyable, easier, potentially longer dive.
- Avoid making any contact with the reef.
- Be conscious of fin kicks in confined spaces. On sandy/soft bottoms take care to not stir up sediment or silt the environment.
- Maintain a respectful distance between yourself and any marine life, taking care to not feed, harass or otherwise disturb animals.
- Photographers should remember that protecting the reef is more important than getting the 'perfect shot'.

## ✓ POST-DIVE

- Donate to local conservation efforts that protect coral reefs. CCMI has a robust research and education programme in the Cayman Islands that is dedicated to restoring coral reefs.
- Assist with local efforts such as reef surveys or sightings of important animals. In the Cayman Islands, dive information can be shared on [coralwatch.org](http://coralwatch.org). Shark sightings can be reported through the Shark Loggers programme.



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