

Surfing with a smile: Bethany Hamilton shares her healthy habits

June 11, 2012

By [Jennifer Mosscrop](#)

Maybe it's the fact that Bethany Hamilton entered and won her first surfing competition at age 8. Or how she "smiled through adversity" after having her arm severed by a 14-foot tiger shark while surfing in Kauai, Hawaii, in 2003. Or that she was back in the water chasing her dream of becoming a pro surfer one month after the accident (which she accomplished in 2007, see career highlights [here](#)). Whatever the reason, Hamilton is an inspiration to so many — so much so that her story is the subject of the 2011 feature motion picture "Soul Surfer."

HellaWella had the chance to talk to Hamilton about her fitness routine, how she stays motivated, and how her positive attitude and warm smile makes her the perfect ambassador for the Damon System — an orthodontic treatment Hamilton underwent at age 14.

Her fitness

Surfing is a physically demanding sport that calls for shoulder and back strength (for paddling) and leg and core strength (for balance while standing upright on the board). Despite her busy travel schedule, Hamilton said she's very adaptive with her cross-training and stays active every day with different activities like hiking, tennis, walking or running, and postural correction stretches.

"I keep my exercise routine not such a routine," she explained. "I like to keep it random so I don't get bored."



Hamilton has been surfing competitively since she was 8 years old.



Pro surfer Bethany Hamilton speaks at a June 6 press event in New York City for the Damon System. Photo by Ormco.

When she's on the road, Hamilton said she finds a local gym, makes space in her hotel room to workout or goes outside for a run. Most importantly, she always has her TRX bands with her.

Hamilton has had a bunch of trainers throughout the last five to six years. "I learned a lot with different trainers," she said. "If I lack the motivation, they'll push

me. I'm usually motivated, so they are [also] a good source of accountability. They help me learn new things and how to keep a workout fresh."

When it's close to competition time, Hamilton lightens up on the cross-training and hits the waves even more.

Her motivation

After her accident, Hamilton said she went through a period of adjusting, and she wasn't sure what the future was going to hold. With her faith in God and support of her family, friends and community, she was able to continue surfing.

"I was more scared of losing surfing than my arm," she said. "I love surfing that much that I would not want to ever lose it."

So how does someone who motivates so many keep motivated themselves?

"I want to look good, feel good and surf good," Hamilton explained. "Be thankful you have the ability to be healthy. Stay active and set goals."

Hamilton also stresses the importance of accountability. "Find a friend, or if you are already motivated, help motivate others."

"We all go through phases that we feel are dragging us down and pulling us under and holding us back from achieving things," Hamilton said. "I think it's important to be thankful for what you do have and knowing what you are passionate about and what you do love and lean toward that."

Her nutrition

Hamilton is not a vegetarian but steers clear of meat most of the time. Whenever she does eat meat, she makes sure it's fresh and locally raised. Most of her protein comes from fish, beans and nuts.

"I'm obsessed with veggies, and I think everyone should be," she said.

Hamilton is sponsored by ZICO coconut water and absolutely loves the stuff. She also drinks a lot of smoothies with fresh, natural ingredients.

The power of a (healthy) smile

"I love living a healthy lifestyle, and good oral hygiene is an important part of that," Hamilton said.

When she was 14, going through the awkward teenage years — with one arm at that — didn't help her confidence and self-esteem. Also, at the time she was what orthodontists call a "Class III case" with a severe underbite, which often requires jaw surgery or extractions; significant crowding; a narrow upper arch; and an open bite (open space between upper and lower teeth). A California doctor contacted her offering free braces using the [Damon System](#), which is a clinically proven treatment approach that aligns your teeth and enhances your facial aesthetics — usually without extractions — using light shape-memory wires that move teeth faster and require fewer adjustments. The Damon System completely transformed her smile and helped her confidently share her story of perseverance with others. The braces helped her smile more, and connect with people all over the



Hamilton and her friend have some fun at the photo booth during a June 6 Damon System press event.

world, including those in need. Now, when she is not hitting the waves, she helps young adults facing life challenges and those recovering from traumatic accidents with the non-profit organization [Friends of Bethany](#).

“I get to meet a lot of amputees and shark attack victims and give them encouragement. Lots of times I get encouraged by them too,” she said. “I also want to help get other people’s stories out who are doing amazing things.”

<http://www.hellawella.com/surfing-with-a-smile-bethany-hamilton-shares-her-healthy-habits/9167>