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Diana Nyad Xtreme Dream 103 miles. Cuba to Florida. Summer 2011

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Going Forward

Posted by Xtreme Dream Team on Sep 26, 2011 in Blog, Slider | 55 comments



Yes, I'm already up and around after swimming 92.2 miles in 36 hours, but it lifts me even higher to be hearing from so many of you far and away the same question: *When are you going to try it again?*

This tells me that you know who I am. Somebody that doesn't give up.

Last Friday, just two hours after setting forth on my third attempt to swim from Cuba to Florida, I was stung by a poisonous jellyfish. The length and severity of the welts wrapping around both my upper arms, my back, and my upper thighs indicate it was from among the most toxic types, either a Portuguese Man o' War or possibly a box jellyfish, the most deadly. In the first thousandth of a second when I felt the surreal whip of something that whisked around me—flashing at a devil of a speed I'd never imagine possible—I didn't say anything. I thought, I've trained for two years as no other swimmer has ever trained, I'm ready, without doubt I can absolutely do this, 103 miles nonstop in these waters,

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Diana's Tweets



- Never stop dreaming! Get your Xtreme Dream hat today and wear it on your journey towards ur own shoreline <http://ow.ly/6HG9H> about 1 hour ago from HootSuite
- L'Shanah tovah! I hope this new year brings you all health and happiness. Best wishes for a Happy New Year. <http://ow.ly/6HhOK> about 3 hours ago from HootSuite
- @imcsquared thanks for the RT! <http://ow.ly/6GDvg> about 4 hours ago from HootSuite in reply to imcsquared
- Steven Munatones, our indie observer, gives us his insights into the Xtreme Dream... <http://ow.ly/6HhOK> about 7 hours ago from HootSuite
- This is more than a blog post, it is my letter to all my supporters and believers that have taken this journey with me. <http://ow.ly/6GDvg> about 8 hours ago from HootSuite

what no one has ever done before. The waters in Hemingway Harbor were glassy; the forecast looked perfect; my team, expert and focused—a sting? This can't possibly be happening— I'd better suck it up and live with it and it will dissipate.

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And then the pain hit me, "Fire, Fire, no, no, no, oh my god he's trying to paralyze me." I'd never felt such pain, though I'd been stung by jellyfish in both previous attempts, in 1978 when I was 29, and just last month, and still went on. But this time, suddenly I couldn't extend my arms, couldn't elongate anymore; I felt a paralysis in my back and could barely breathe. These creatures paralyze fish by shutting down their respiratory system. I yelled, and 30-year-old Jonathan Rose, my EMT for the first 12 hours, leaped into the water. He tried to take the stingers off me, and he was stung. Thereafter, his symptoms were 10 minutes behind mine, even after he took two shots of epinephrine. (I took none, fearing it would make my stomach sick.). This morning, asked how he felt, Jon said "I still can't take a deep breath."

I swam on for 34 more hours after that sting, even after being stung a second time hours later, and then a third time across my lips after that. This morning, after hearing Jon describe his symptoms, severe pain that lingered and degrees of anaphylactic shock that nearly incapacitated him on the boat for five hours, I realized the jeopardy I had just put my crew members through. Certain types of jellyfish are the most dangerous of all marine life. What if Jon had been stung again in trying to treat me? Who would med-vac him from the middle of the ocean? What if he had died?

Later, I learned that 80 percent of openwater swims are cancelled because of jellyfish stings, and no swimmer has ever swum past a Man o' War encounter. Surreal as it was, on the second night, again right at dusk I was hit again. Again, the pain was beyond words. The paralysis of the lungs, the

convulsions, the feverish cold and hot. The independent swimming observer onboard told my team I would to come out of the water for such a life-threatening event. The medical team wrapped me

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in blankets, gave me steroid injections, epinephrine injections, and recommended we end the swim. But that's just not me. I got back in.

Yet I swam on for 34 hours before being convinced that another sting, which came to seem probable, could have the cumulative effect of risking my life and possibly a teammate's, and I decided to get out.

How could this have happened... I prepared for everything, but not deadly jellyfish; there is no protection from them.



I can't be disappointed in myself, I just can't. I was brave. I went beyond the previously perceived human limits. But I am disappointed in the ending; I must admit that to you. I signed up for the daunting distance, more than a hundred miles. I signed up for the sharks (we call them "friends"), the Gulf Stream, all of it. But potentially fatal jellyfish stings—that wasn't on the agenda, and I admit they were too much for me.

You have yet to hear the details of my journey, of the part that just ended, but you will, moment by moment, here on this site in the coming days. As we're resting and sharing with you what we've just lived through as teammates, I am looking forward to the next question, confident that the question you come to ask will be different than When are you going back in the water? Because you will be transformed as I have been by an epic experience, your question may become, What in the world are you going to do next?

My answer right now: I don't know, but you can bet it's going to be a Nyad!



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Photos by Christi Barli



55 Comments



John G in N.C.

September 26, 2011

I'm the first to comment? gee...

can we pull Sanja Gupta back in for another interview? I loved the CNN feature he did.

With tear filled eyes after reading this..

I wonder, presuming another attempt will come...

Could there be some sort of netting or V Shaped floating deflection that would in effect clear a path ahead of the swimmer extended in depth a few feet into the water yet skimming the surface.. such that it could be towed like the fiber optic line is at night and thus would "sweep" any floating jellyfish or other things from the path of the swimmer

Reply



Elizabeth Dunn

September 26, 2011

I can't even imagine what your next step will be, Diana. But I'm going to swim in

your wake—I just started training for my first 10k open water, cold water swim. (64 degrees, brrr!) Thanks for your dogged determination and for proving that we can

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Reply

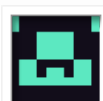


Fiona

September 26, 2011

One amazing amazing lady. Rest now consider. And know you have thousands and thousands of fans behind you. Thank you !

Reply



Judy W

September 26, 2011

Diana-You may not have achieved your goal, but you accomplished something so rare in these polarizing times-you brought together a global community who cheered you on every stroke of the way. Some would see that as even more impossible than your swim. It's my hope that you find comfort in that knowledge, and in your decision to move your "finish line."

Reply



Diane

September 27, 2011

So true, Judy, all of it!!!!!! 🙄 And congratulations, Diana, you already won!!!!

Reply



Sara

September 26, 2011

Thank you for being in inspiration and for being such a positive role model for young gay women. It is through your strength and perseverance that allow us to see we can do anything, regardless of what others say. You say you didn't reach that distant shore but I say you did. You reached it when you committed to another try, when you glided through hour 39 with searing pain, and when you showed the world and myself the courage to say you had found that shore in yourself. Thank you for all of this, your absolutely amazing!

Reply



janice

September 27, 2011

what does this have to do with being gay?

Reply



Na'ama

September 26, 2011



So glad to hear from you, Diana. Having been stung—and only very lightly, as jellies go, as a child, I know a tiny bit of the shock of pain that comes and lingers and lingers and somehow infiltrates the very nerve cells that call pain, ‘pain’. To have continued to swim after this—and through it yet again—was beyond being brave. It defines tenacious and the power of will.

Interestingly enough, the only thing I really thought of reading about the heroic swim you just undertook was not “when is she going to try again?” but “what is she going to be doing next, cuz i bet she won’t be sitting in a rocking chair knitting booties for the next half century...”.

And so, after this entry, I find myself leaning back contentedly and saying to myself: “yep, am considering myself on notice to watch for what you Nyad next...” On second thought, probably even booties would be something Nyadic. So who knows...

You rock on gal! May you be ever blessed with the friendship and support that you attract—beings of determined light do that.



Reply



Mary Langford

September 26, 2011

I was thinking the same thing – netting towed in front to clear a path. Anyway, Diana, whatever you do, I will be following you and cheering you on. Just let us know. You got me excited about swimming again which used to be my life. Not on your grand scale though. All the best.

Reply

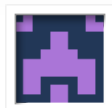


carol

September 26, 2011

yes, tears in my eyes too, as one of the other readers said. your courage, your determination – so deeply moving and inspiring. and i am absolutely thrilled to hear the answer to: whatever in the world will you do next?? because i cannot WAIT to hear about it! best of all possible wishes, diana!

Reply



LisaJ

September 26, 2011

Diana you have sucked me in. Your spirit of adventure and need for conquering the challenge, is intoxicating. I will anxiously await word of what you are doing next. Hold your head high. What you have done in one weekend is more than most do in a lifetime. Bravo to you and your fantastic team of friends and colleagues.

Reply



Carol Atwell

September 26, 2011

Let our well wishes wrap you in a HUGE HUG! Thanks for going out there, woman. You're a great role model!

Reply

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Colleen Fales

September 26, 2011

Diana- I have followed your journey since before your second attempt. I am in

awe that after all the events that you physically went through you kept going. You see I suffer from sever anxiety and I am always concerned about my health. I

to know is you have helped me knowing if you can go through a life threatening condition and kept going and are hurt but are going to Recover it motivates me to know I am ok and will be. I know one of your goals was to inspire and you inspire me in a zillion ways but this one way is life changing for me. You are my hero I look forward to hearing all the details as I check all day for updates. I can't wait to hear what the next chapter will bring. My hope and dream would be one day to meet you in person shake your hand and say thank you for impacting my life to allow me to live again. Onward!

Colleen fales Maynard ma

Reply



Eunice

September 26, 2011

After the first stings, I asked my husband,"How do adventurers know their limits?" I could not "get" when someone who pushes their body like you do knows when to stop. Now I know. I continue to be amazed by your physical and mental strength. Thank you for allowing us to tag along on this amazing journey. We are looking forward to the next one...whatever it may be.

Reply



Alex k

September 26, 2011

Darn, I thought you had super human powers, while it. Appears you are a mere mortal, you are a hero to all....you are amazin

Reply



Tracy Gates

September 26, 2011

Diana, I was playing squash with some friends over the weekend and one – knowing how fascinated I was by your story – said to me 'you know Diana Nyad's back in the water, don't you?' I stared at him. "No. Way." Although I may have used something stronger than 'way.' I don't know why I was surprised. And when I stopped to think, I thought, of course she is. I'm a woman who at 45 is also seeking athletic and emotional adventure, and I wonder sometimes why that desire is so strong in me. And then I read an interview you did that put words to this desire. You said: "I'm immersed in the everyday, full tilt." And that made such perfect sense, because no matter what we do or pursue in life, it's most important to do something with passion and with persistence, to feel it fully and to appreciate the people around you that help you when you need it. Thanks for showing so many of us how to live – no matter what we choose to do.

Reply

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Julia Wolfe

September 26, 2011

I wouldn't ask "when are you going to try again?" You said this was your last time.

You are a woman of your word – that's very clear – and I applaud you for knowing and respecting your limits. Your limits are so far beyond mine to appear to be in a

the important thing, regardless of what that challenge is. I can't wait to see how you choose to challenge yourself (and us) next. Nyad on!

Reply



Shelly

September 26, 2011

For me it is enough that you made the valiant attempt, not once but three times.

Sometimes one knows when the end of one adventure is over and another has yet to hatch. We must not let our needs for you to complete some event get in the way when you may have moved onto another place with the whole thing.

Wherever you are with the whole thing, you are a remarkable woman and I honor you.

Reply



Vicki

September 26, 2011

I am looking forward to see what you do next! We certainly don't want you to risk your life, though. I am really sorry that the stings derailed your great swim. Hoping you heal up quickly.

Reply



Lucia S.H.Trillo

September 26, 2011

For now, you will relax physically, but I'm sure your mind is working a thousand, to find a way to neutralize this new obstacle. Is in your essence, not giving up.

Reply



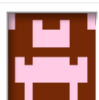
Bobbi Simpson

September 26, 2011

Wow! Hats off!!!! I just finished my first two mile open water swim and think of it as a huge achievement. . 05 of swim plagued with cramping. Gosh my arms feel like

I could go much further. I can't understand or comprehend around the clock swimming, in all kinds of conditions.. I would love a documentary on your life. To get a taste of a hero of our day! Thank you for being such an inspiration!

Reply



Robin

September 26, 2011

I think you proved your point, achieved this goal. You may have missed the last few miles, but you certainly proved your strength, stamina and ability – I don't think anyone questions whether you would have been strong enough to finish. I'd

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love to see you turn your drive and talent in a new direction, something fresh and equally inspirational. I can't wait to hear what you choose!

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Ali

September 26, 2011

You are beautiful and I love how Nyad you are 😊

You are right. You did it. You really did it.

Reply



Melana

September 26, 2011

"Life is not about how fast you run or how high you climb but how well you bounce." ~Vivian Komori

Diana, you "bounce" pretty darn high! Again, congratulations on your accomplishment.....and that is exactly what it was. I read this post with tears....we all know you will get beyond this and continue to do fantastic things....

Reply



Kori

September 26, 2011

You are Superwoman!! The toughest of the tough and fearless beyond words! I can't wait to hear of your next adventure and I know it will be a true Nyad! Your inspiration fills my soul with determination and confidence. Rest yourself and be at peace. You are amazing.

Reply



Pen

September 26, 2011

So sad about your failures! English Channel three times. Now this three times. Seems like your unlucky number my sweetheart. Why don't you just go back to England and do the real channel that real ocean swimmers do. Or is it about the money and attention? Knowing you, you will continue on toward ill-gotten rewards when you really were never much of an accomplished swimmer.

Reply

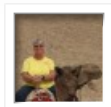


Name

September 26, 2011

And what pray tell are you so accomplished at? Do tell.

Reply



Kathe

September 27, 2011

What a bitter failure you must be, Pen. This comment of yours is nothing about Diana and everything about you. Kathe

Reply



Name Yvette

September 27, 2011

Are there sharks and Japanese man o war in the english

channel?

Reply

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Mike

September 27, 2011

Nice Pen Im with ya.

Reply



Mike Lewis

September 27, 2011

"Pen" – what is a real "ocean swimmer"? Open water swimming is not a private club. OWS takes many forms, in many places and serves as an outlet for millions of people worldwide. I am intimately aware of the strength and determination that Diana exhibited in her quest. She did not fail. "Pen" take some time to witness the levels of inspiration she brought to the world.

Reply



Jean S.

September 26, 2011

Ok, Ms. Nyad, enough with the biting things out there in the deep dark ocean. I'm glad you're alive and healing and I'm glad your teammates are alive and healing. I have no clue what you'll do next but I know it ain't gonna be little. Thank you for continuing to inspire me and so many others – your thoughts about how to get through a day now make any 'ole ordinary day an adventure, now, because I'm trying to live them with a helluva lot more spunk and gusto. I think I finally "got," at the ripe 'ole age of almost-59, the meaning of, "This is the only today you're going to get."

Good luck without whatever comes next because I know that even if that means staring off into space for a day or two you'll be adding a special twist to it:)

Reply



Tabitha Hall

September 26, 2011

You are a hero to me. I think that you showed such stamina and courage to keep on going and then again to realize the danger you were in. Thanks for all that you do for us "aging athletes." I am staying tuned.

Reply



Caroline

September 26, 2011

I wear my Nyad shirt proudly! and people say to me "I like your shirt!" We have a mutual thing, and we have watched you along this journey. I am so grateful to have discovered this adventure. And so grateful I am 46 and looking for next big

thing. My Nyad! Thank You!

Now, I hope you take all that makes you who you are and be with yourself and your power. Your path has led you here to this moment. It is the way for you!

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Reply



Jay S

September 26, 2011

Enough already, Diana. You have proved your mettle. You have inspired millions. You've made an indelible mark in sports history and human endeavor. Now it's time to look after your own health and even survival. Even the greatest of us has a limit. And it's wise to realize and respect it. No one will think the less of you for doing so. Indeed, they may think more.

Reply



JHM

September 27, 2011

Well said, Jay. If you're the Jay S I think you are, you're more than qualified to make such a strong, affirming comment. Well said, something Diana can truly take to heart.

Reply



Nancy Curran

September 27, 2011

You are a true adventurer knowing both when to challenge, and when to honor nature! Thank you for sharing that with so many others. Mother Nature is a phenomenal power that first we honor and then we can rise to her call.

I look forward to seeing how you honor and rise to the call next.

Reply



Mike

September 27, 2011

She Didn't Rise To Call. She Failed. Anyone Blogging on this site can Attempt, if you have the \$\$\$\$\$\$. It's like climbing Mt. Everest. Pay To Play

Reply



Ivy Kupec

September 27, 2011

Seriously? How easy it is for you to dismiss the athleticism and determination that got her through as far as it did. How far can most people swim...out in an ocean...with jellyfish stings that attack one's nervous system...in salt water that dehydrates and affects your overall body? OBVIOUSLY, her dream cost money, but that was the nature of this beast...and HER dream. How many people decide NO dream is worth having?

Who forget about having goals once they are past "the prime of their lives." It's the having a dream, finding a way to keep challenging herself and going out after it that I find so noble. Diana Nyad is

squeezing everything out of the life she has been given. And therein lies the success. We may not want to swim from Cuba to Key West, but we should all have our own version of a dream that keeps us reaching beyond what we know we can do and reminds us how to be alive.

Reply

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Barbara

September 27, 2011

Diana, during your swim was my first time being on a blog or reading the comments of others to CNN or on your face book page...

By doing what you're doing – you put yourself right out there... not only in the ocean, but in life. Because of this, you too are a recipient of the stings of so many man-of-war on land. I hope you can stay away from or deflect their mean spirited words and not let them sting you. You have been hurt enough. My hope for you, is that you listen to the inspiration and joy you have given to so many.

I know how you like a good song. As with the ole saying, even in music there are rest notes... please let your self rest, recover and rest some more. Sometimes the hardest thing to do – is nothing and that brings so much wisdom in itself.

You are a champion – no matter what you do next, stare at a wall, hang-out, or just be. The world is wide open!

My best to you-

Reply



Barbara

September 27, 2011

P.S.

It's okay to sew some beads on belts!

Reply



Jeannie

September 27, 2011

Oh, Diana. I don't think you should try it again! I've been stung by an ordinary jellyfish, so I can't imagine how you continued to swim after what you went through. Please—find somewhere safer to swim a distance if you must!

Reply



Maggie Steltz

September 27, 2011

I hope you try it again!

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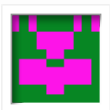


Go on....□

Who told that women were weak? □

[Reply](#)**Janis***September 27, 2011*

Wow, your words of inspiration are just awesome!!! YOU are awesome!!!! I saw you talking live at the press conference yesterday morning, and something you said just really hit me and I just loved it! I wish I could remember word for word, but sadly I shortly after got caught up chasing my 3 & 5 year olds around the house. 😊 It was something like "I only surround myself with people for a passion for life", and I so wish I could remember what else you said in regards to that!! It was just fabulous! If anyone else can remember what I'm talking about, can you please help me out here? 😊

[Reply](#)**Mary Stan***September 27, 2011*

Ah, that's what has moved into my heart, a Nyad! A non-removable, fallback place of hope, focus, and willingness. And a place of comfort that we're all just doing what we can. Brava!

[Reply](#)**Deirdre Robbins***September 27, 2011*

Diana you are an inspiration to us all especially the over 50 group. You are amazing and I wish you well. Congratulations on a great job, sorry you did not get to finish, but at least you started. Good luck

[Reply](#)**Julie Ryan***September 27, 2011*

What can I say that's not already been said but from a fellow open water swimmer in the UK – Gosh you have some guts! I was stung for over an hour whilst attempting the English Channel last year and it's a nightmare! I couldn't even begin to imagine what you went through! I hope you continue to swim and swim hard – you are an inspiration and motivation to us all!! Take it easy – you deserve it!!!!

[Reply](#)**Patrice Titterington***September 27, 2011*



Diana, congratulations on your epic attempts to swim from Cuba to Florida! As you search for another life goal to achieve...may I suggest that you consider promoting global awareness of the effects of global climate change on the world's oceans. With your love of the ocean, verbal gift for sharing your life experiences with others, and your media experience, I think that you would be a natural spokesperson for this cause.

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Reply



Beverly McCarter

September 27, 2011

You are my hero! I admire you so much. I have to say I was so glad to see you give it another try. Something tells me you are not done.....

Reply



Bill

September 27, 2011

Wow to think i was just browsing the internet that august day on your first attempt. And seen the post that you was going to swim from cuba to flordia. Never heard of you before that day so i started to goggle you and follow you and was and still are amazed at your courage,determination,and will power not to mention the positive affect you have on people. I have followed you ever since sometimes not even sleeping.You inspire me to continue on my journeys and know that if i can have a fourth of your courage, dertermination and will power i will succed. Thank you, Congarts on what you have accomplished and good luck on your future dreams. Your friend and avid follower Bill
Ps. cant wait to see what you are going to do next!

Reply

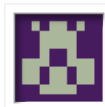


Pen

September 27, 2011

Mike from above knows the truth on real open water marathon swimming. He's right, Myad has never completed any of the major channel swims. What about the English Channel? Nope, never done it. Even in her "prime" she couldn't do it. Even with three attempts, she never completed it. And, there are no jellyfish there! Ahhhh, maybe she should go back and do it to prove that she is a world class swimmer and just not some Queer fund raising wanna be in 85 degree water.

Reply



Pamela Garnish

September 28, 2011

Put your money where your mouth is...

No matter how much of a hypocrite you and all those who are critical of Diana's feat and those who were before and after, the human spirit is stronger. Through our goals, dreams and ambitions we show ourselves and those around us our true inner character and heart. Knowing the human spirit we would all probably forget your rude and hypocritical comments and even cheer you on!

*that is when you put a swim suit on and jump in the ocean to swim 103 miles!!!!

Reply

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Johnson

September 27, 2011

Pen and Mike are correct. In fact, independent observer Steve Munatones had to be on board this time around to make sure Nyad didn't cheat – as in wear fins – like a past attempt. What she is doing to the sport of regulated channel crossing is an embarrassment. A medical timeout? Give me a break – there is no such thing. It's called stay in or get out – NO TOUCHING OF THE BOAT – let alone climbing on board. I say that if Nyad can't complete the English Channel, she doesn't belong in any recognized Hall of Fame for Swimming accomplishments except her own Queer closet.

Reply



Barbara Schoichet

September 28, 2011

The negativity expressed by Pen, Mike and Johnson is nothing more than homophobia. It has nothing to do with Diana Nyad, nothing to do with her courage, nothing to do with the caliber of human being that she is. Negative comments such as these are spurred by ignorance and jealousy, and are, in fact, nothing.

Reply

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Dream

"Diana is more than a swimmer. She's a beacon of hope to us all that we can dream big, live life large, and look back at all of it with no regrets whatsoever."

- Thoughts From Independent Observer Steven Munatones
- When you Dream Big
- the most venomous marine animal known
- Going Forward
- Diana Nyad Press Conference: 11am, Key West

- Shirley miller on When you Dream Big
- Swimming Vacation on When you Dream Big
- DONIELLE on When you Dream Big
- Lyndon Effinger on When you Dream Big
- Lindy Binns on When you Dream Big

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