



Coral reefs are among the world's most spectacular ecosystems and snorkeling is an excellent way to explore them. As coral reefs face an increasingly uncertain future, snorkelers and other coral reef visitors can play an important role in helping protect these fragile habitats. Follow these simple guidelines to become a "coral friendly" snorkeler.



BEFORE SETTING OUT TO EXPLORE THE REEFS

- For your vacation, choose an environmentally friendly resort or hotel; one that practices energy conservation, recycles, and treats sewage and solid waste in responsible ways.
- Pay user fees or make a donation when visiting coral parks and other marine conservation areas.
- Get the best possible snorkeling instruction you can.
- Practice snorkeling skills away from the reef.
- Make sure your equipment fits properly before you snorkel near corals—it can be very difficult to adjust in the water.
- If you feel uncertain, or are an inexperienced snorkeler, consider wearing a snorkel vest for added buoyancy.
- Learn all you can about coral reefs—they are fascinating and fragile environments.



IN THE WATER

- Never touch corals; even slight contact can harm them. Some corals can sting or cut you.
- Select points of entry and exit to avoid walking on corals.
- Maintain a comfortable distance from the reef, so as to avoid contact.
- Know where your fins are at all times and don't kick up sand.
- Stay horizontal in the water while you're near or above the reef.
- Learn to swim without using your arms.
- Take nothing living or dead out of the water except recent garbage which does not have living organisms on it.
- Move slowly and deliberately in the water—relax as you swim and take your time.
- Avoid using gloves in coral environments.
- Remember, look but don't touch.



Good snorkelers know that the best way to enjoy a reef is to slow down, relax and watch as reef creatures go about their daily lives undisturbed.

Be sure to find out about local laws and regulations as they may differ from these general guidelines.





SNORKELING



MINIMIZE CONTACT WITH MARINE LIFE

- Never chase, harass or try to ride marine life.
- Never touch or handle marine life.



ON BOATS

- Choose snorkel operations whose boats make use of available moorings —anchors and chains destroy fragile corals.
- Make sure garbage is well stowed, especially light plastic items.
- Be sure to take away everything you brought on board, such as packaging, used batteries and bottles.



SHORESIDE

- Support coral parks and other conservation projects:
 - Visit established coral parks and pay applicable user fees that support marine conservation.
 - Encourage and support the use of boat moorings.
 - Participate in local initiatives to monitor the marine environment.
 - Participate in cleanups.
 - Make a donation or volunteer your skills to support a coral park. For example, you can participate in a reef survey, conduct outreach, or help educate others about reef conservation.
 - Donate used equipment such as cameras, dive gear or reef identification books.
- Avoid purchasing souvenirs made from coral, turtles or other marine life—this is often illegal, and it's never environmentally wise.
- Speak up. Make sure your snorkeling buddies understand these simple but important conservation practices.



The Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL) is a member-supported, non-profit international organization dedicated to keeping coral reefs alive around the world. Visit our website <http://www.coral.org>



Visit the Project AWARE Foundation website at www.projectaware.org to find out more about protecting the aquatic environment and its resources.