



Elaine O'Rourke at her home break in Gloucester, MA.

of delicious Portuguese cuisine and the scrumptious "Pastille de Nata" (little custard tarts) were my lunch-time surf treats.

Great Investment

In September, I did a road-trip with my mum in Southwest France and Northern Spain and hit up some surf spots. Feeling more confident in my surfing abilities, I rented different boards and joined the locals who were extremely good, so I spent more time dodging them than riding the waves!

Purchasing my first board, Betsy, was such a great investment. Now I look forward to getting up at the crack of dawn, putting my wetsuit on, jumping on Betsy and paddling out. Granted, the waves during the summer are pretty small, but I enjoy being on the board and in the water so much. Admittedly, I feel bad-ass.

The bonus with surfing is that it is amazing exercise. I've gained strength, especially in my core. It also gave me extra incentive to add a lot more core-based movements into my yoga practice that feel safe for my ostomy. I realize this can be a catch-22 as people don't want to get a hernia, but at the same time, knowing how to engage and utilize the core muscles are so important and something that I teach in my program.

Happy Place

The beach is my happy place and I'm known locally as the beach yoga girl as I teach there all summer. I grew up by the sea in Ireland. So it's no wonder that just lying on my board puts a big smile on my face. The fact that it feels fine to be on my tummy and ostomy for that long gives me pause for gratitude. I'm well aware that is not the case for all ostomates due to different stoma sizes.

I'm stoked to say that I've joined the hardy New England surfers paddling out in the winter. Now I am one of the crazy folk!

I'm a sporty, active ostomate, but I had to work through my fears and a lot of tears to gain confidence and feel good about myself. What is on your summer list of things to do? Are there reasons you are telling yourself that you can't do certain things? Listen to your train of thought and keeping searching for the true answers to lead you to true acceptance and reaching your potential.

Elaine O'Rourke created the online program "Surviving to Thriving: Overcoming Ostomy Challenges So You Can Live a Fulfilling Life." www.ElaineOrourke.com; Facebook: [ostomyibdlife](https://www.facebook.com/ostomyibdlife); Instagram: [elaineorourkeyoga](https://www.instagram.com/elaineorourkeyoga); Email: Elaine@ElaineOrourke.com. ☂