

Notes for Instructors for Try-A-Dives

The Introduction to Diving Course should be an enjoyable and comfortable experience which satisfies the widely held ambition to 'try diving'. Its primary purpose is to allow people to find out more about the sport; what it is like to use an aqualung in safe, controlled conditions and - if they feel inclined to go further - what learning to dive involves and will cost. The course provides this experience and knowledge through informal classroom presentations and practical experience in warm sheltered water such as a swimming pool.

You should all know that the entry requirements are:

Able to swim 100m freestyle

Read and sign Introduction to Diving Course Form *

Liability and Insurance

Completion of the Introduction to Diving Course Form includes signature of a liability waiver; all those taking the course should complete one. BSAC Membership Third Party and Public liability insurance covers visitors on an Introduction to Diving Course for a maximum of two Branch meetings. An extension to this cover can be arranged by the BSAC's Insurance Adviser. [Liability insurance policies held by BSAC Schools provides similar cover]

Assessments

Apart from a check on swimming ability to begin with, there are no practical or theory tests in this introduction course. However, course instructors should continuously assess progress and at the end of the Course, consider whether the person has the potential to become a diver, and the attitude to be a welcome new member of the Branch. Counseling may be necessary to help prospective members assess their suitability for diving.

Equipment and facilities

Provide set of basic equipment, aqualung and BC, weightbelt for each course member Water depth: standing depth with progression to 2 m maximum. Entry/exit by steps/ladder, or walk-in entry.

DIVING EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES BRIEFING

- Explain why each item necessary, features, preparing and fitting Aqualung and Buoyancy Compensator (or harness)
- Explain the following things in basic terms only.
 - What each part of an aqualung is and does; hints for putting on
 - Need to breathe normally when using aqualung:
 - Don't hold breath
 - Don't be afraid of breathing out hard - next breath will be there!
 - Explain purpose of Alternative Air Source on Instructor's set
 - Weight belt: why necessary, how to operate quick release
 - Effects of Pressure: warn of pressure on ears and mask, how to relieve it
 - Neutral Buoyancy: explain concept of weightlessness, need for neutral buoyancy within span of breathing
 - Use of weights and BC for major adjustments, depth of breathing for minor ones.
 - Exhale to sink, inhale to start rising
- Signals: Demonstrate/practice essential signals - OK, Up, Down, Stop, Something not right, Distress; plus any training signals (watch me, you do it, etc.) which may be needed

SWIMMING CHECK (5 mins)

- Check swimming ability with 100 m freestyle swim

USING BASIC EQUIPMENT

- Do not let pupils enter water before you. Always leave water after them. Always stay with them, and have AAS at hand.
- Preparing and fitting: initial skills
- Demist mask, rinse, fit to face, adjust strap.
- Hold rail/squat down to submerge face, test mask for leaks while breathing through DV.
- Fit fins while standing in shallow water. Holding poolside rail
- mask on, breathing through DV, lie horizontal in water and practice correct finning action: move from hips, minimal knee bend, legs straight from hips to toes and fin blade.
- Swim a couple of lengths on surface using correct finning technique.

CHECK

- Mask correctly fitted/sealed, strap adjusted for comfort
- Able to pinch nose
- No tendency to exhale through nose
- Straight legs, toes extended, swing from hips
- Avoid cycling action, excessive knee bending

USING THE AQUALUNG

- Assist visitors into sets while they stand in shallow water; adjust BC/harness for comfort, breathe from set
- Refit mask and fins (if removed)
- Lie face down on bottom (1 m depth), breathing from set.
- Inhale- float up: exhale - sink. If necessary, put air in BC or use weightbelt to achieve neutral buoyancy within span of breathing
- While kneeling in standing depth, demonstrate mask clearing, demand valve clearing: invite visitors to partially flood and clear mask; remove, refit and clear demand valve
- While kneeling in standing depth, have visitor close to instructor, to breathe from Alternative Air Source.

- Check Set correctly fitted and adjusted for comfort
- Neutral buoyancy within span of breathing
- Relaxed breathing: avoid any tendency to keep lungs full or to pant
- Be alert for those who display any signs of being ill-at-ease - keep them in standing depth
- An Aqualung Dive Take visitors on 20 minutes underwater tour
- Stay in standing depth until confidence is established: hold hands if it helps to overcome nerves.
- Remind visitors to equalise pressure on ears and mask
- Point out things of interest - other divers under training, set simple underwater activities - knots, puzzles, games etc. - to occupy them
- Have underwater photographer take their pictures
- Use signals as appropriate. Indicate to equalise pressure if necessary
- Stay close, regularly monitor air supply

EXIT

- Return to shallow water exit point
- Ensure visitors feel well on surfacing
- Assist with removal of aqualung set, pass up to attendant
- Visitors remove mask, fins, snorkel and leave water

DEBRIEFING

- Ask if experience was enjoyable, what their reactions were, deal with questions.
- Encourage those who were obviously competent to consider BSAC membership.
- Give counsel to borderline cases - some may find that they do not have a natural aptitude/that diving is not what they expected it to be.
- Afterwards, provide Course Organiser with details for entering on reverse of Introduction to Diving Course Form