

## **TRY DIVE TOP TIPS by Stella**

Please see BSAC information sheet attached for briefing info and aims of the try dive.

Do ask them beforehand if they are confident in the water. I agree with not asking them to do any skills, although it is good to use fin pivot and use of inflator hose / breathing to control their buoyancy so they can be a little more independent during their try dive swim. It can feel a little boring to you to swim length after length, but challenging them to swim without touching the bottom / surface or to a race to the shallow end is usually enough to keep their interest. Some trainees do struggle with mask clearing and occasionally reg clearing, why make it negative for them?

I think the most important thing is to make them feel comfortable and safe by being confident yourself – ensure your briefing includes that they can come up at any time if they are uncomfortable, not happy or just want to ask something. I like to surface at the shallow end each time just to chat, feedback to them on progress / techniques to make their swim easier and to allow them to ask any questions.

I have included some points to consider below, they are just my personal opinion, based on lots of experience, I do not insist that I am right in all aspects!!!

- Put BCD on first and show controls, how reg can free-flow if let drop into the water, let them breathe from the reg first without their mask and then with it to make sure they feel ok with breathing
- Let them try their mask face first into the water when standing / kneeling to make sure it does not leak
- Then try breathing with reg and mask face first when standing / kneeling so they can lift head if not happy – if they hold onto the side they will feel safer and be able to come up easily
- Put your mask / reg in and crouch down together just under for a few mins, give OK signal then UP and surface, ask them to hold onto the side to make it easy for them to get up if they are not happy
- Then put fins on – a bit more difficult with BCD on, but worth it to make trying reg / mask easier
- Chat, reassure and then lie down face to face and ensure they are OK for a few mo's then UP again, put on any weights if needed – add a little air if they need it (eg child / small with a big cylinder)
- Tell them you are going to swim to deep end - remind about ears, signals, to keep BCD on their back by pushing it back with their hand if it spins around their body and that you will turn back at the deep end
- Ask them to steady themselves with their hand/s on the bottom and say you will control their BCD

During the dive

- Stay immediately side by side, no need to hold on unless they are very nervous - if they are negatively buoyant they will not go anywhere fast
- Stay on BCD inflator side so you can add air if necessary, keep them a little negative for stability
- Signal OK frequently to encourage them - be very attentive to reassure them
- Be ready to do a lift should they become nervous, panic or if they ask to come up
- Halfway to the deep end ask if their ears are ok, demonstrate equalising and encourage them to try, when they do equalise signal to check their ears are OK – each time
- Turn around at deep end - let them be on the outside of the circle so they do not unbalance
- Come back to shallow end and surface to chat, feedback and give any tips
- Repeat lengths and introduce other aims like BCD controls and fin pivot / breathing effects
- Plan to only surface at the shallow end unless they have a problem / want to come up
- If you do surface at the deep end - swim on the surface, reg in, and descend again in the shallow end – it is too much to expect them to dump, clear ears, control descent, balance and not hit the bottom in the stranded turtle position – it may panic them – much easier to keep control in shallow descent
- When they seem settled stop at the deep end and practice BCD inflate / effect of breathing in a fin-pivot type exercise, a few lengths with a challenge not to touch bottom / surface will test them!

To finish off de-kit in shallow end and feedback positively on their progress – point out to them the keeper of certificates!! They can also get further info about joining.

Thanks for your attention, I hope my top tips were useful, especially to those with less try dive experience.

Stella Evison – October 2017

## TRY DIVE POOL SESSION CHECKLIST



A Try Dive event is a great way to give members of the public a taste of scuba as well as giving the participating club the chance to recruit new members as a result. Below is a step-by-step outline of a Try Dive pool session, from the moment the try diver is greeted by their instructor at the poolside to the all-important de-brief at the end of the session.

### 1. Instructor requirements

The minimum qualification for a Try Dive instructor is Assistant Diving Instructor (ADI). The minimum of an ADI status is important as good technique and the communication skills learnt on the Instructor Foundation Course and the Instructor Training Scheme are essential to ensure the try diver gets a safe introduction to diving.

The instructor/student ratio for a Try Dive session is ideally 1:1 to ensure the instructor is able to provide the right level of attention and support. Where ADIs or Dive Leaders are used, the session must be supervised by a nationally qualified BSAC Instructor.

W.e.f July 2015, Dive Leaders can also conduct try dives within their branch under the supervision of a Nationally Qualified BSAC Instructor. Please see separate specific guidance for Dive Leaders conducting try dives at [www.bsac.com/DLtrydive](http://www.bsac.com/DLtrydive)

### 2. Meeting your try diver

A warm welcome is essential – this is most likely the first time the participant has ever tried scuba and will probably be a little anxious as to what will happen next.

Introduce yourself by first name and let them know your instructor qualification to reassure them. Be friendly and remember their name, ask about any previous experience – snorkelling or diving on holiday – and if there is anything in particular they are worried about.

### 3. The plan

Explain to your try diver that the objective of the session is to give them the chance to experience diving underwater using scuba equipment in a safe pool environment. Remember – no instruction of skills other than basic pool technique should be provided within the Try Dive session.

### 4. Swim check

There is no need to ask the participant to do this as a formal 'test' before the Try Dive as this could put pressure on them. Instead, casually ask them to do a length of the pool as a 'warm up'. This checks that they can swim and are comfortable in the water.

### 5. Fitting the equipment

With the equipment at hand, move your try diver to the shallow end of the pool. Start by showing them the mask and fins and explain how to fit them correctly. Then move on to the BCD – explain its use and operation and then help the try diver to correctly put on the equipment. Use a weightbelt (if necessary).

### 6. Safety considerations

Explain to the try diver about the possibility of pressure on the ears and mask squeeze and how to relieve the effects. Point out any other safety considerations about potential hazards in the pool area, as appropriate.

### 7. Signals

Demonstrate the core signals to be used during the Try Dive session - OK, up, down, stop, watch me – and ask the try diver to repeat the ones they will need to use.

### 8. Using the scuba equipment

Explain the breathing technique with the demand valve – out of the water first and then progress to just under the water when ready.

In the shallow end, lie face down and demonstrate the finning technique and how, by using the BCD, buoyancy can be adjusted at any depth.

Conduct simple buoyancy tests in the shallow end, helping the try diver to adjust their initial buoyancy. Then progressively increase depth, monitoring the try diver all the time.

### 9. Time to dive!

Check that the try diver is comfortable and their buoyancy is ok, adjusting with weights if necessary and then take them for a swim around the pool, progressively increasing the depth. Demonstrate and signal them to equalise pressure on their ears and mask if necessary. As you progress down the pool, point out anything of interest under the water – pool toys, other try divers or swimmers etc.

Make sure you monitor their air regularly, use signals and invite the try diver to signal back in return. Maintain regular eye contact to reassure them and to check for any signs of distress or discomfort. Be mindful not to let the try diver get too cold – 15 to 20 minutes pool time is often adequate.

### 10. Exit

When the allotted time is up, return to the shallow end of the pool and signal to your try diver to surface. As you help your try diver to de-kit in the water, ask them how they enjoyed their experience and answer any initial questions they may have about the session. Give them positive feedback and provide a short de-brief using REAP – Review, Encourage, Assess and Preview.

Once out of the pool, show them where they need to get changed and invite them to meet you in the bar/clubhouse for a chat and to get their Try Dive pack. ...and their Try Dive certificate!

**If you have any further questions regarding the practical side of running a Try Dive session, please get in touch and we will be happy to help. Contact the Diver Resources Team on +44 (0)151 350 6203 or email [drt@bsac.com](mailto:drt@bsac.com).**