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Scuba Diving FAQ

We always welcome questions and comments by email - and we reply to them all. But, you might find what you're looking for by browsing through these FAQs.

This resource section is ideal for beginners as we provide short and simple answers to the most common questions about scuba diving.

Frequently Asked Questions from Beginners

- [Ask "Scuba Steve" any Question about Diving \(Response by Email\)](#)
- [Common Questions Asked about Scuba Diving with Simple Answers](#)
- [Everything You Need to Know about Scuba Training and Certifications](#)
- [FAQ about the Professional Association of Diving Instructors \(PADI\)](#)
- [Most Popular Questions about Scuba Equipment and Gear for Divers](#)
- [Questions about Freediving, Snorkeling, and Spearfishing Activities](#)
- [Sea Life and Aquatic Marine Animals: Online Guide and Help Section](#)
- [We Have the Answers about the Best Diving Destinations Worldwide](#)

Pro Tip: *Another section contains comprehensive information about the [dive sites in Thailand](#). They include all the popular locations such as [Phuket](#), [Phi Phi Island](#), and [Pattaya](#).*

Let's dive in...

FAQ about Scuba Diving

Is Scuba Diving an Extreme Sport or Dangerous?

In years gone by, the media considered scuba diving as being a dangerous occupation and meant only for the military.

In fact, recreational diving is adventurous. But, it is not normally regarded as being an extreme sport (e.g. high speed or high risk).

The bottom line is this...

Nowadays, a range of strict training regulations and reliable scuba gear help to keep [scuba diving injuries](#) - and especially [scuba fatalities](#) - to a minimum.

In fact, the injury rates are so low in scuba that "statistically" you are more likely to die from obesity or be killed by a hippo.

Pro Tip: *Click through to the [wildlife](#) section for information about [the world's top Killers](#) - the answer may surprise you!*

Do I Need to be Good at Swimming?

If you are a good swimmer you should already be comfortable in water. Thus, the [Open Water Diver course requirements](#) include some modest swimming skills for successful completion.

Students need to demonstrate that they can comfortably maintain themselves in water too deep to stand up in. You can choose between these two methods:

- A swim float (tread water) for ten (10) minutes and either:
 - A two hundred (200) metre continuous swim using any swim stroke you like (or);
 - A three hundred (300) metre swim using a basic [snorkeling set](#) (e.g. a mask, snorkel, and fins).

Pro Tip: *Swimming proficiency is not needed for the [PADI Discover Scuba Diving Experience](#). Even so, you should have an appropriate level of comfort while you are in water.*

What Health Conditions Might Prevent Me from Diving?

You should have a reasonable fitness level and be in general good health for scuba diving. But, some of the [scuba diving safety rules](#) may prevent you from participation.

Some of the common health issues that could stop you diving include recent ear surgery, lung disease, and being pregnant. Click here to download the [RSTC Medical Statement \(PDF\)](#) for further information.

Why Should You Always Dive with a Buddy?

There are three important reasons why you should not go diving alone. First, it is more fun to have people around you, right? Second, it's a lot easier if you have someone to help you (e.g. donning and doffing your equipment). Third, [using the dive buddy system](#) is much safer!

How Soon Can I Fly after Scuba Diving?

Experimental trials indicate that the risk of experiencing [decompression sickness symptoms](#) decreases as the preflight surface interval increases.

Based on the studies, the Workshop reached the following consensus recommendations and apply to [flights at cabin altitudes](#) between 600 and 2400 metres (2000 and 8000 feet) and to divers who do not have DCS symptoms.

Work by Buehlmann, used by the US Navy Diving manual, also suggests that an immediate ascent to 600 metres (2000 feet) altitude is possible with low DCS risk.

In 1999, the US Navy adopted more flexible procedures broadly based on Buehlmann and Vann et al. Thus, following these recommendations can reduce DCS risk but it does not guarantee that a diver will avoid DCS altogether.

For dives within the no-decompression limits:

- **Single Dives** - A minimum preflight surface interval of twelve (12) hours is suggested.
- **Repetitive Dives and/or Multi Day Dives** - A minimum preflight surface interval of eighteen (18) hours is suggested.

Can I Dive with a Disability?

Diving and snorkeling have huge physical and psychological benefits for people with a disability. As a result, disabilities do not hinder anyone from scuba diving.

In addition, adaptations in [PADI training standards](#) optimise the inclusion of people who are handicapped in some way.

Key takeaways:

The extra mobility and freedom, the rehabilitation, and the added challenges, is now extended to this wider audience to welcome disabled divers.

In fact, the International Association for Handicapped Divers ([IAHD](#)) is a diving association that focuses on providing the means for people with physical disabilities to become scuba divers. The IAHD offers training programs and guidelines, materials, and member support for this developing market.

So, we need competent and professional instructors to help these individuals participate in a disability dive course.

Pro Tip: *We believe that the benefits of scuba diving can be just as rewarding to handicapped divers, with an emphasis on freedom of movement, virtual weightlessness, and body mobility. Of equal importance is the bond that develops between a trusted scuba instructor and a relentlessly motivated student diver with special challenges.*

What's the Best Way to Return to Scuba after Inactivity?

Remember, diving is a safe sport until the day that you forget how dangerous it can be! So, if you've been inactive for a while (e.g. longer than six months), use our free [diving refresher tips](#) to brush up on a few safety reminders in scuba diving.

Scuba Training FAQs

What is the Minimum Age I Can Start Scuba Diving?

PADI have scuba certifications for youngsters from the age of eight (8). The [Bubblemaker Program](#) and the [PADI Seal Team courses](#) encourage kids to start young.

Children must be aged ten before they can enroll in the entry-level course and get certified as [Junior Open Water Diver](#). Even so, there are maximum depth limitations and specific supervisory conditions for kids and teenagers.

Do I Need a Medical Examination for Scuba Diving?

Each student must read and sign a [Medical statement](#) and [Diving Medical questionnaire](#). If a student checks "yes" to any of the items, a physician needs to approve their fitness for diving before any in water training takes place.

Some of the serious [contraindications to scuba diving](#) would not allow safe involvement in the sport. In this case, it would be best to get evaluated by a general practitioner. Further information is available from the [World Recreational Scuba Training Council \(WRSTC\)](#).

Pro Tip: *The forms are not necessary for participants in [PADI](#) and [EFR](#) courses that do not involve water activities, such as [Emergency First Response Certifications](#).*

How Do I Learn Scuba Diving?

The last time we checked, we counted 214 diver certification organisations around the world. So, when you are [choosing a dive centre](#), it's best to contact one that adheres to WRSTC regulations.

According to the World Recreational Scuba Training Council, all dive shops should be using well-maintained diving equipment and qualified scuba instructors with an appropriate [diving insurance cover](#).

Can I Learn to Dive Online, and if So, How?

In fact, you can start to [learn diving online](#) from the age of ten (10) if you get affiliated with either a [PADI Dive Center](#) or [Resort](#).

Student divers get access to the online versions of the manuals and have full interaction with the relevant dive center (e.g. via emails and posted discussions).

Upon successful completion, the students can print their eLearning Record and head to their affiliated PADI Center or Dive Resort to continue the scuba training portions.

What is a Scuba Referral?

It's quite common for some student divers to begin their training in one location and then want, or need, to continue their training at a different location.

Most [PADI® Scuba Diving Courses](#) can be transferred to another instructor (or Resort) so that students can continue or complete dive courses in different locations.

Why?

The reason divers choose to take part in the scuba referral most often is when they start learning in a cold climate and cannot complete the water training because of poor weather conditions.

Thus, the [PADI referral](#) allows you to complete the course in another region where conditions for diving are optimum.

PADI Diving Questions and Answers

What is PADI?

PADI is the largest scuba training certifying organisation and recognizes scuba certifications in almost two hundred countries worldwide. They have regional headquarters in America, Canada, Australia, Asia, China, Europe, the United Kingdom, Africa, Russia, and Japan.

Why Should I Choose PADI for Scuba Training?

PADI stands for the Professional Association of Diving Instructors. They are the world's largest recreational diving membership organisation.

Moreover, the [PADI scuba training system](#) is based on proven educational design principles and has evolved since the inception in 1967.

In fact, the [PADI Open Water Diver course](#) is the most sought-after diver certification in the world. Through their training, divers will learn the importance of protecting fragile aquatic ecosystems and are encouraged to become involved in preservation efforts.

How Many Days Does it Take to Get PADI Certified?

The Open Water Diver Certification usually takes three (3) to (5) five days of scuba training. There are five academic sessions to complete, five shallow water skill sets, and a minimum of four (4) open water training dives required to achieve the certification.

Here's the thing:

Nowadays, getting qualified to dive is even easier with PADI's independent study approach because you can [learn to dive online](#) at home.

After about thirty (30) hours of tuition, the instructor will issue you with a temporary completion card until you get certified by the appropriate PADI Regional Office.

They mail your official diver's licence, with your photograph, within a few weeks. Furthermore, PADI scuba certifications do not expire from their records.

Does PADI Have a Dive Log App?

Two applications have different objectives. The PADI App™ makes it easy to access [eLearning courses](#), view diving certifications, and [log scuba diving data](#).

The [PADI Adventures™](#) app is for booking classes or fun dives, and for [exploring scuba destinations around the world](#).

What if I Don't Get My PADI Certification Card?

After completing the certification, you should receive your card within four (4) weeks. If not, contact either the [PADI Dive Center owner](#), the Resort, or the certifying instructor.

Often, an instructor or dive center will make a request to receive it on behalf of the diver. But, if they don't have it, you should contact the local customer service department.

How Can I Buy Physical Certification Cards?

Head on over to the [PADI website](#) to buy physical versions of certification cards - made from 70% recycled materials.

You can choose between the standard card or one of the PADI Limited Edition designs (includes the Limited Edition eCards).

Does My PADI Certification Expire?

No... scuba licences do not expire and your certification to dive will be valid for life. Nevertheless, if you are inactive from diving for more than a few months it's always best to join a dive shop [scuba diving refresher](#) to brush up your training and get your safety skills reviewed by an instructor.

What Happens if I Can't Complete a Course?

If you are unable to complete your scuba course the PADI Instructor may grant you a [PADI referral](#) for the portion of the course that you already completed. Then, you can finish the course at a later date.

Dive Gear Help Section

Why Doesn't My Scuba Cylinder Contain 100% Oxygen?

Breathing one hundred percent oxygen from [scuba cylinders](#) at sea level is very safe. After all, they use it for medical treatment in hospitals right?

But, if a scuba diver descends too deep and breathes too much partial pressure of oxygen, then it can be toxic - and in some cases fatal.

What is Nitrox Diving?

[Nitrox](#) is a mix of nitrogen and oxygen gases. Enriched air (nitrox) is a mix with 22% - 40% oxygen. This increase in oxygen, and decrease in nitrogen, allows divers to stay longer at certain depths while staying [within the limits of recreational diving](#).

FAQ about Watersports

What's the Best Month for Water Sports in Thailand?

Almost any month is a good time for diving and snorkeling in Thailand. Even so, you may want to avoid the traditional monsoon season that tends to affect different regions in different months of the year.

Pro Tip: *Another help guide contains more information about [diving holidays in Thailand](#), including what to do - and what not to do!*

How to Book a Course or Snorkeling Tour in Pattaya?

The Private Scuba Team makes it easy to reserve your course or [snorkeling tour in Pattaya](#). Simply fill in the details on our [contact us page](#), and we will confirm your booking with a personal and prompt reply. We look forward to meeting you soon.

FAQs about Marine Life

Do Deadly Sharks Attack Divers Underwater?

We expect you've seen videos and [news reports](#) of deadly shark attacks. Some of these tragedies involved scuba divers or snorkelers.

Unprovoked, it's extremely rare for a shark to attack viciously, especially if it is given plenty of respect and space underwater.

In case you're wondering:

The [correct response to an underwater shark encounter](#) is to stay close to the sea bottom and swim away slowly, while tracking the shark's movements.

To help calm your fears about being attacked by a man-eating shark, read about [six top killers of humans](#) that are much more deadly than shark attacks.

We think you will be stunned by the facts and figures. Most experienced divers are pleased when they see sharks underwater because they are becoming an endangered species in some areas of the world.

Diving Destinations Guide

Where Can I Find the Best Places for Scuba Diving?

Generally, scuba divers are attracted to the sport for a variety of different reasons. A good place to start is deciding whether your passion is:

- [Diving from a boat](#)
- [Shallow beach diving](#)
- [Sunken shipwrecks](#)
- [Warm, clear water](#)

Then, grab yourself a coffee, take some time to relax, and go and explore our section that covers the [best dive sites in the world!](#)

Is there a Recompression Chamber in Pattaya?

There are several hyperbaric chambers in the Pattaya area, and most websites refer to the Recompressions Chamber at the Thai Navy base in Sattahip.

But, there is also a hyperbaric chamber at the Bangkok Pattaya Hospital (BPH), used to treat [scuba diving-related injuries](#) and for oxygen therapy.

Bangkok Pattaya Hospital
Sukhumvit Road, Naklua
Banglamung
Telephone: 038-259999 EXT 6062

Pro Tip: *The [Pattaya tourist guide](#) contains more information about health facilities, tourist attractions, and shopping.*

Can We Help with Transport Services from the Airport?

Our slogan is "We're Here to help" and we have used the following airport and Bangkok transport services ourselves:

- [Bell Travel Service \(budget priced air conditioned airport bus services\)](#)
- [Pattaya Van \(low priced air conditioned Bangkok/Pattaya mini bus services\)](#)
- [Mr. T Pattaya Taxi Service \(very reliable airport taxi service\)](#)

We can also make recommendations about staying somewhere safe and clean in Pattaya. But, you should accept that accommodation ranges from budget apartments to luxury Hotels.

Finally: You can download our diving questions and answers PDF for future reference or send an email and ask for Scuba Steve if you need further help.

Divers also enjoyed reading about...