



Preparation for a return to dive UK sites and seas

Although we are currently in lockdown, it is time to start preparing to scuba dive UK sites and seas. We are all very keen to get back in the water again.

We understand that everyone is heartily sick of COVID-19 rules, hence this is an appeal for divers to do the right thing, and behave accordingly. Please take into consideration the following guidelines as you get set to scuba.

- **Diving Fitness**

It is quite probable that in the past you took your dive fitness for granted. However, a long lay-off from any activity can affect your mental and physical ability - and you won't notice this until you are in the water.

Now's the time to start carrying out a series of exercises to build up realistic stamina and fitness levels, so that you to be safe when you dive. As soon as you are allowed back in the water, don't expect to pick things up from where you left off. Just because you were regularly diving to 30 metres before, doesn't mean you should jump straight back in to that depth. Take your time and a series of dives to slowly work up (or even down) to your previous, regular depth and level of diving.

- **Medical Fitness**

Divers need to comply with relevant medical requirements, and medicals may have lapsed, so check your dates. There is now the added complication of any impact COVID-19 may have created. Your respiratory system can be affected by the Coronavirus and can have long term effects that could impact on your ability to dive safely. If you have any doubts, seek professional medical advice from a diving doctor. Bear in mind that if you require a medical examination, there could be a delay in booking it.

- **Mental Fitness**

It has been proven that diving and being near water is beneficial for good mental wellbeing. Being in the right "mind set" for returning to diving, can include making sure you are properly prepared. Start reviewing your training material and work through scenarios - carry out some preparation and planning for hypothetical dives.

- **Equipment Fitness**

Check that you have all your equipment and it still fits and functions.

You should consider making arrangements to have your equipment professionally inspected. It may be that your equipment will need to be serviced. Not every service centre may be open at this time and travel restrictions may impact on your ability to visit any dive centre or shop that is open. It is worth getting this done in a timely manner, so if you are able to book a slot, it will help to ensure there are no unnecessary delays.

Your cylinders need to be “in test”, so check the dates, and book them in early for testing.

You can carry out some checks on your regulators, but as you may not have used them for some time, consider having them professionally inspected and / or serviced as required.

- **Dive Planning**

Be more conservative in your gas management planning and monitoring for your initial dives. It is more than likely that your initial dives this year will be conducted when the water is at its coldest. Please remember your training. It is perfectly acceptable for anyone to call a dive at any time for any reason. There is no shame in climbing out of the water before your pre-agreed time if you are getting cold, or finding the dive more challenging than normal.

- **Your Buddy**

It is equally important that your buddy, regular diving partner, or dive team has taken the above sensible steps to prepare too. Why not involve them in your plans, so that you are ready to hit the water together.

These useful links have more information on preparing to return to diving
APSTO - [Organising the first dives of the season](#)