



# **CALIFORNIA DIVE CENTER™**

*“where the family learns to dive”*

715 El Camino Real  
San Bruno, CA 94066  
(650)588-4998  
(650)827-7900 (fax)  
[www.cadive.com](http://www.cadive.com)  
[info@cadive.com](mailto:info@cadive.com)

## **California Dive Center Top Questions Asked by non-divers**

There are many questions that you may have when deciding to enter into the world of Scuba diving. It is a magical world, but it is unknown. Here is a list of the most common questions we get; this document is intended to help with your curiosity of taking the first step into becoming a certified scuba diver! If you have any other questions, please don't hesitate to ask anyone on the California Dive Center team. We're here to make you feel comfortable.

### **Is it hard to learn to scuba dive?**

As active recreational pastimes go, scuba diving is one of the easiest to learn. While you're gliding around enjoying the underwater sights, you're engaged in only three basic skills: floating, kicking, and breathing. Of course, there's more to it than that - becoming proficient at using the equipment and developing knowledge of scuba concepts and safety procedures - but if you breathe through your mouth, chances are you can learn to scuba dive.

Learning to scuba dive is mostly a matter of attitude. If you are motivated to step through the door into an exciting new world, then the experience will prove both energizing and confidence-building.

### **Are the skills for scuba diving hard to learn?**

The necessary skills are not tough for most people to master. During scuba certification class you're taught about safe diving practices and you rehearse equipment related skills in a pool until you feel comfortable, as well as practice what to do if things don't go as planned.

### **Isn't the equipment and gear difficult to learn how to use?**

The bulky scuba gear worn by many divers may seem intimidating, but learning to use it is straightforward. If you've snorkeled, you're already familiar with the mask, snorkel and fins. The scuba unit consists of an air cylinder containing compressed breathing gas, buoyancy compensator (BC) jacket to help you float on the surface and maintain your desired depth underwater, and a regulator for you to breathe through. The exposure protection keeps you warm when diving in cool-water environments.

### **Don't I have to be a strong swimmer?**

You don't need to be a strong swimmer or an athlete to scuba dive, but some degree of comfort in the water certainly helps. Even if you enter scuba training with less than total confidence in your water skills, by the time you receive your first certification card, your comfort level will be greatly increased. After your certification you might find yourself being one of the many enthusiasts who scuba dive for the sheer pleasure of floating weightless in an environment as close to outer space as the majority of us will ever experience.



# CALIFORNIA DIVE CENTER™

*“where the family learns to dive”*

715 El Camino Real  
San Bruno, CA 94066  
(650)588-4998  
(650)827-7900 (fax)  
[www.cadive.com](http://www.cadive.com)  
[info@cadive.com](mailto:info@cadive.com)

## **Doesn't it hurt your ears?**

This question comes from people who have snorkeled before and tried to dive beneath the surface - free dive. They swim headfirst down to about 6 - 12 feet (2m) and suddenly develop a stabbing pain in their ears, sending the shooting back to the surface. The unknowing assume that they have an ear problem that precludes them from scuba diving. On the contrary, the problem is due to a lack of knowledge about the effects of pressure and is easily prevented. If you fly in a plane without serious ear discomfort, then your ears should not present an impediment to diving.

The remedy while diving is to “equalize” the pressure caused by going deeper in the water by pinching your nostrils shut, lifting your chin and gently try to blow out through your nose. Some divers even equalize by simply moving their jaw or tongue. Unless your ears are stuffed by colds or allergy symptoms or you are one of the few people born with a narrow Eustachian tubes, ear pain is not an issue.

## **What is there to see down there?**

A whole new world of incredible sights awaits the scuba diver, no matter what the underwater environment - fresh or salt water; tropical or cold water, ocean, quarry, lake or river. It shouldn't be hard to envision your self gliding effortlessly through a crystal-clear tropical ocean, marveling at rainbow-colored fishes flitting about a vibrant coral reef. You have already been treated to underwater scenes such as this on TV, in movies or perhaps a friend's underwater video or pictures. You may have even caught a glimpse of this while snorkeling in Florida, Hawaii, or the Caribbean.

In each underwater setting there is more to see than the fish, corals and other water animals such as crabs, lobsters and shrimp. In warm water there are many different types of reef animals such as christmas tree worms, in colder waters such as in Monterey there are beautiful kelp forests which are like an underwater jungle! Living creatures aren't the only wondrous things under water, in some scuba diving adventures there are known for their shipwrecks and even flooded villages and drowned forests.

## **Isn't it to dark when you deeper in the water?**

This is not the case in most warm water areas, where visibility commonly exceeds 100 feet (30m). In colder water environments visibility can vary from 5 feet-50 feet, but in many cases both in warm and cold there are underwater dive lights available both for seeing as well as lighting up the colors on the reef systems.

## **Aren't you afraid of sharks?**

Of the almost 400 species of sharks inhabiting our oceans, only a handful are known to be aggressive toward man; none of these are typically encountered by divers. Despite their position at the top of the ocean's food chain, sharks reaction to a diver's presence in their domain is commonly one of disinterest. Half of the shark attacks are to surfers, whose appearance on the water's surface approximates that of seals or sea lions, a major food source for some species. *In California there has never been an incident of a recreational scuba diver in a shark accident.*



# **CALIFORNIA DIVE CENTER™**

*“where the family learns to dive”*

715 El Camino Real  
San Bruno, CA 94066  
(650)588-4998  
(650)827-7900 (fax)  
[www.cadive.com](http://www.cadive.com)  
[info@cadive.com](mailto:info@cadive.com)

The “Jaws” movie were largely responsible for image of sharks as man-eating killing machines, and the media attention surrounding last year’s shark attacks in U.S. waters unfortunately reinforced that impression. The fact is that sharks are in far more danger from humans than we are from them. It is estimated that up to 100 million sharks are killed each year as catch to commercial fishing activities as well as for disproven medicinal remedies and shark fin soup. Several species are actually in danger of becoming extinct.

Many scuba divers actually seek out shark encounters. The Galapagos Islands of Ecuador, Cocos Island off of Costa Rica and Flower Garden Banks in the Gulf of Mexico are popular destinations for diving with schooling hammerheads.

## **Why do you need weights?**

Believe it or not, the human body is quite buoyant. With your lungs, full of air, you’d be hard pressed to sink, especially in salt water. That’s why people have no trouble snorkeling - when you lie flat on the surface with your head in the water, your weight is easily supported, whether you weigh 100 pounds or 300 (45kg-136). Add scuba equipment and you become even more buoyant. Even though scuba tanks will sink when full, divers wear buoyancy compensators (BCs), vests that not only secure the tank to the diver’s back but also contain inflatable air bladders to provide flotation on the surface. Wet suits are made of neoprene, a type of rubber that contains thousands of tiny air pockets. These air cells provide insulation to prevent heat loss and in addition add considerable buoyancy.

Weight is worn either on a weight belt or can be put in weight pouches that insert into your buoyancy compensator (BC). The amount of weight varies from a couple of pounds (1kg) to more than 30 pounds (14kg) depending on a variety of factors. Salt water, for instance, is more buoyant than fresh water, so about 2.5 percent more weight is required.

## **How deep do you go?**

The industry standard depth limit for recreational divers is 130 feet (39m) at sea level. During basic scuba certification, students experience depths of 25-60 feet (8-18m), and a “deep” dive is considered more than 60 feet (18m).

“Going Deep” is not an end in itself for scuba enthusiasts. Science has shown that the vast majority of marine species live at depths less than 60 feet (18m).

## **Are my kids too young? Am I too old?**

Scuba diving is a nondiscriminatory activity. Anyone with the physical ability to handle the equipment and the emotional maturity to comprehend the rules and take responsibility for his or her safety and that of his dive buddy, can scuba dive safely and enjoyably.



# CALIFORNIA DIVE CENTER™

*“where the family learns to dive”*

715 El Camino Real  
San Bruno, CA 94066  
(650)588-4998  
(650)827-7900 (fax)  
[www.cadive.com](http://www.cadive.com)  
[info@cadive.com](mailto:info@cadive.com)

There is no upper age limit on learning to scuba dive. Certain conditions may preclude those of any age from diving, temporarily or permanently, especially conditions associated with lung functions. As long as you maintain relatively good physical and mental conditioning, it's never too late to learn scuba diving. Many divers continue into their 70's and 80's.

Minimum age restrictions do apply. There are many children's programs for children at age 8 to start to get a taste of scuba diving under strict supervision and depths not exceeding 6 feet (2m) of water. This is typically done in a pool.

In general, children must be 10-12 years old to be certified as "junior" divers, who may dive only under restricted conditions, such as limited depth and supervision by a scuba professional or certified adult diver. At 15, students receive the same certification as adult divers.

## **How do I get certified?**

You must take a certification course to get certified. The basic scuba certification course, commonly called Open Water diver, is divided into three sections; academics, confined water and open water.

The academics portion develops the knowledge base necessary to understand the principals behind diving rules and procedures. You practice dive procedures and learn to use the equipment in a confined water section, usually in a pool. The open water section consists of four or more supervised dives, during which you will demonstrate your mastery of scuba skills in an actual dive setting. Typically this is done in depths no deeper than 30 feet (9m).

## **How long does it take?**

Traditionally this involves several classroom/pool sessions spread over days or weeks with a weekend spent at the open water dive site. California Dive Center offers two options, The PADI Open Water Scuba Class or a Weekend Accelerated Format.

The PADI Open Water Scuba Class is a three and a half week class consisting of seven classroom/pool sessions (twice a week) and ocean dives on the final weekend of the class. The ocean dives consist of four scuba dives and one snorkeling dive.

The Weekend Accelerated Open Water Course is the exact same course as our regular format, except that it is done in only two weekends! This two weekend course consists of all the class and pool sessions in the first weekend, and ocean dives on the second weekend of the class. *This format does require the student to review and complete the courseware knowledge reviews prior to the first class.*

California Dive Center will make it work for you. You have the capability of breaking up the weekends and the pool work for a schedule that works for your time. We also offer



# CALIFORNIA DIVE CENTER™

*“where the family learns to dive”*

715 El Camino Real  
San Bruno, CA 94066  
(650)588-4998  
(650)827-7900 (fax)  
[www.cadive.com](http://www.cadive.com)  
[info@cadive.com](mailto:info@cadive.com)

private classroom instruction, just check with any member of the California Dive Center team.

### **Isn't it expensive?**

Once certified, scuba diving can cost as little as renting a scuba tank, or having your own filled which is less than \$10 per tank, and traveling to an area lake, quarry, river or public beach ocean entry. Compare this with the price of lift tickets at ski resorts, or a round of golf which can run between \$40.00 and \$300.

One thing that other sport activities have in common with scuba diving is the need for equipment. Purchasing a set of scuba gear - BC, regulator, exposure protection - is no more expensive than getting started in golf or skiing. For the infrequent diver, renting equipment may be an attractive alternative. Of course, as in all worthwhile pursuits, you may choose to expand your scuba “must have” list with items such as a dive computer, underwater camera and other accessories.

### **How much is it to get certified?**

Costs for scuba diving compare favorably with those inherent in other active recreational pursuits. California Dive Center PADI Open Water Diver total training fees for a group class are \$254.00. The fees are broken down in order to provide many training options to our clients. The fees are broken down as follows:

\$ 50.00 - Classroom/Pool Fee

\$ 79.00 - Rental Fee includes wetsuit, hood, regulator, compass, air pressure gauges, weight belt, buoyancy control device (BCD) and air tanks

\$125.00 - Instructors Fee/Certification Fee

You must also purchase the courseware for the classroom. The price depends on the media you choose and varies between \$79.00 and \$129.00. The course ware includes the workbook as well as training video that you may use after you're certified to refresh your skills and procedures of scuba diving. The only equipment you must own which is considered personal equipment is a mask, snorkel, gloves, booties and fins. Typical packages for your personal equipment range in prices from \$110-\$400.

### **15. Traveling to dive is very expensive, isn't it?**

Scuba diving vacations are available to suit every budget, from weekends in bunkhouse accommodations with shore diving, to luxury dive resorts in exotic locations. The price of airfare is a major factor in considering vacations to faraway destinations, whether it's for sightseeing or diving, or a combination of both. Live-aboard dive boats offer the opportunity to visit remote dive destinations and do as much or little diving you desire for an all inclusive price.

Check with California Dive Center front desk for a variety of dive trips and dive weekends already scheduled!