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About the CourseFor advanced freedivers who want to approach elite freediving levels. You'll learn to bring your static apnea, dynamic apnea, free immersion, and constant weight skills to the next level. If you're an advanced freediver who wants to learn how to fine-tune your lifestyle and training so that you can approach elite freediving levels, then the PADI Master Freediver course is for you. Through focused sessions, you'll bring your static apnea, dynamic apnea, free immersion, and constant weight skills to the next level. To enroll in a PADI Master Freediver course you must be at least 18 years old and have a PADI Advanced Freediver certification (or a qualifying certification from another freediver organization). You also need to have Emergency First Response Primary and Secondary Care (CPR and First Aid) training within the past 24 months. Your instructor may also offer the PADI Emergency Oxygen Provider specialty diver course at the same time. Freediving is about inward power, discipline and control. If you've always wanted to enter the underwater world quietly, on your own terms, staying as long as your breath allows, then freediving is for you. Taking the PADI Freediver course is your first step toward discovering why freediving is becoming a popular way to explore beneath the waves.To enroll in a PADI Freediver course you must be at least 12 years old. You need adequate swimming skills and need to be in good physical health. No prior experience with snorkeling, skin diving or freediving is required.The PADI Basic Freediver course is a subset of the PADI Freediver course. It's a great first step for developing solid freediving skills. You learn basic freediving principles and focus on practicing breathhold techniques in a pool or confined water site.The PADI Basic Freediver course consists of two main phases: Knowledge Development through independent study with the PADI Freediver eLearning (or your instructor may conduct class sessions if not available in a language you understand).Confined Water Session to learn breathhold techniques as well as static and dynamic apnea, plus proper buddy procedures. Goal - static apnea of 90 seconds and dynamic apnea of 25 metres/80 feetEquipment. In the PADI Basic Freediver course, you learn to use a mask, snorkel and fins, and may also use a wetsuit and weight belt. Using gear designed specifically for freediving is best, however, in this course, you may be able to use snorkeling equipment you already own.Check with Diveworld about the gear you'll use during this course and get advice about everything you need from your PADI Freediver Instructor. Try Freediving Experiences - £50 PADI Basic Freediver £180 The PADI Freediver Course is your first step into freediving, the purest form of exploring underwater world. You don't need any previous experience in snorkeling or scuba diving. This is the most popular freediving course for beginners AND self-taught freedivers, pool freedivers and spearfishermen that want to improve their freediving techniques and learn how to freedive safely and efficiently. The course is designed to prepare you to freedive in the dynamic open ocean conditions. You will learn and practice fundamental skills so you can freedive safely and efficiently. After completing the course you will be able to plan and execute safe freedives in the sea as one half of a responsible and competent buddy team. This is a comprehensive course where you are taught in the classroom, confined water and open water. It is the most important first steps in getting a solid foundation for freediving. Freediving is about inward power, discipline and control. If you've always wanted to enter the underwater world quietly, on your own terms, staying as long as your breath allows, then freediving is for you. Taking the PADI Freediver course is your first step toward discovering why freediving is becoming a popular way to explore beneath the waves. Learn breath hold techniques Learn correct buddy procedures Conduct confined water static apnea for 90 seconds Conduct confined water dynamic apnea for 25 metres Conduct Open Water constant weight freedive to 10 metres Course Prerequisites No previous experience of snorkelling, skin diving or freediving required. Minimum age of 12 years You must be comfortable in water and possess a basic level of swimming ability. During the program you will need to complete a 200 Metre continuous unaided swim or a 300 Metre swim with mask, fins & snorkel Good physical health. You must complete the PADI Freediver Medical Statement prior to the program start date. Any pre-existing medical conditions highlighted on this form will require medical clearance before any in-water training can take place. Knowledge Development Knowledge development is based on independent study, using the innovative PADI Freediver Touch interactive learning materials. Once downloaded to your smart phone of tablet, you can access the course material anywhere, at anytime, without the need for an internet connection. Independent study is backed up by your PADI Freediving Instructor, answering any questions you may have. The comprehensive PADI Freediver Touch may be used for the PADI Basic Freediver, PADI Freediver, PADI Advanced Freediver & PADI Master Freediver programs and covers the following topics: Freediving skills Freediving safety Freediving techniques Equalisation for freediving Breathing for freediving Preparation and recovery for freediving Gear and equipment for freediving Environmental factors and wildlife awareness Course Duration The duration of the program ranges between 1 & 3 days, depending on previous certification and experience & is split between confined water training, theory and open water training. Course Price Upgrade From PADI Basic Freediver - £145 If you have completed the PADI Basic Freediver program then you will already possess the required PADI Freediver Touch course materials. You will also have covered & met the confined water requirements for this program, so you will only be required to complete the open water section to upgrade to the PADI Freediver level. Price Includes: PADI Certification Fee Equipment Hire Open Water Training (Excludes Entrance Fees) Full PADI Freediver - £290 If you have no previous training or certification in freediving then you would complete all sections of the PADI Freediver program, including, theory, confined water and open water training. Price Includes: PADI Freediver Touch Course Materials PADI Certification Fee Pool Fees Confined Water Training Open Water Training (Excludes Entrance Fees) Equipment Hire Freedivers silently blend into the underwater environment. They enjoy magical encounters with shy marine life and hear all the sounds of the ocean: fish munching on coral, the tide pulsing at the rocks, and even the calls of dolphins and whales! Freediving is the perfect way to reconnect to the sea and explore the depths of the oceans with minimal impact. Some people freedive for the personal challenge, but for many, the true appeal of freediving is in the silence and calm it brings to their hectic lives. PADI, AIDA, SSI, Molchanovs, Apnea Total.... What do they all stand for? Which is the best organisation to choose for a freediving course, and can you change between organisations as you do different level courses? In this article I hope to answer these questions and more. In the beginning of my freediving career, I went through most of them in the search of the cheapest and best option. Like many freedivers, my budget was very limited and my priority was to get as much time freediving for as little money as possible. After going through the above organisations, I realised that the most important rule when choosing a freediving course is to make sure you get a good instructor. Most of the courses will have a similar outline and structure. This means that the biggest factor will be the person presenting the information and supporting you throughout the course. How can you then ensure that you get a good and trustworthy instructor? For this you can take a peek at the different organisations requirements. The first thing would be to check what it takes to become an instructor for the organisation. The deeper or harder requirements the organisation has for the instructor candidate, the more you can be sure that your instructor has gone through a lot of own training and deep diving. He or she has probably also experienced a lot of setbacks and come up with ways to get around them, which will make them able to better explain and help you to go deeper or overcome a certain barrier. You will also make sure that your instructor has a genuine passion for freediving, which is probably the most important quality for an instructor. The depth requirements for freediving instructors are as follows (Deepest first): 1 . Molchanovs - wave 3 instructor - 52 meters CWT bifins. Wave 1 & 2 - 42 meters. 2. AIDA - 50 meters. 3. SSI - 40 meters, SSI level 3 is 50 meters4. Apnea -Total - 40 meters5. PADI - 40 meters, or 20 meters if already are scuba diving instructor. How much does a freediving course cost? The prices vary from school to school and are usually more expensive in big cities and in more developed countries where the school or instructor has to pay more tax and has more expenses. The price for a freediving course can go for anywhere from 150€ to 500€. And it doesn't really differ much depending of the organisation. The school or instructor will set their own price regardless of the organisation they're teaching from. The cheapest places to learn freediving (from my experience) are: So what do the different organisations stand for? 1. Molchanovs - Made by the best freediver in history, Nathalia Molchanova. By freedivers, for freedivers. This organisation is all about teaching you the right way from the beginning. If you want to learn from the best instructors and make sure that your instructor is trustworthy and has a true passion for freediving, then this organisation is for you. What's so different with the molchanovs system, is that you are able to continue your training and follow a training schedule from the website and be part of the molchanovs community. 2. AIDA - Association Internationale pour le Développement de l'Apnée, Here you get a good course for your money. A safe and reliable course where you learn the right basics. Also an organisation which only teaches freediving. The first course I took and which I enjoyed a lot. Has also top level instructors. 3. SSI - Scuba Schools International, A very accesible school which you can find in most places you go to. As for the name, it can be a bit misleading at first. But even though they started with scuba diving teaching, now they're been in the freediving business for long and are also a safe bet to choose and is widely spread and have a good recognition. 4. Apnea Total - This organisation has a very easygoing and fun attitude towards freediving education and is usually very affordable. Here you won't have any theory tests or long theory sessions. Instead, most of the course will involve diving both on the line and snorkelling around the reef but usually no pool session. 5. PADI - maybe the most well known organisation of the above. You can find a school teaching PADI pretty much everywhere you go, so its really accessible and has a lot of instructors around the world. But the downside is that some of the instructors are scuba diving instructors and have little or almost no experience in freediving. This is due to that they've made it so easy for PADI scuba diving instructors to crossover to freediving without much training (They only have to be able to dive to 20 meters). So here you have to be extra careful to make sure you get a legitimate freediving instructor! So, can you switch around from the different courses? For example do a level 1 with SSI, and then do wave 2 with Molchanovs? Yes, in most cases you can. Here again, it's up to your instructor, and if he or she feels that you are ready or not. But in my experience, this has been possible in all the organisations. And I am personally letting people join my courses coming from different organisations if I feel that they're ready for that. The last thing I want to mention is the amount of students that will be in the course. The best would be if it's only you and the instructor on the course, so you get more time freediving and as much attention during the course as possible. According to the rules, it's not allowed for the instructor to have more than 4 students in the course. If there are more, the instructor needs an assistant to help out. Me personally, I try to avoid a class of more than 3 people when I'm teaching. Just because it's hard to give everyone the right amount of attention and the time freediving that the student paid for. So to summarise, when you walk in to the next freediving shop or are looking around on the web. Ask who your instructor will be, what experience he or she has, and what organisation the course will be taught as.As you can see in the article, I let you decide for yourself which of the different organisations to choose. I can not say which one is the best or the worst. It is a question of preference, and what you're looking for. I hope this article has made it easier to make this decision. The PADI Freediver Course is your first step into freediving, the purest form of exploring underwater world. You don't need any previous experience in snorkeling or scuba diving. This is the most popular freediving course for beginners AND self-taught freedivers, pool freedivers and spearfishermen that want to improve their freediving techniques and learn how to freedive safely and efficiently. The course is designed to prepare you to freedive in the dynamic open ocean conditions. You will learn and practice fundamental skills so you can freedive safely and efficiently. After completing the course you will be able to plan and execute safe freedives in the sea as one half of a responsible and competent buddy team. This is a comprehensive course where you are taught in the classroom, confined water and open water. It is the most important first steps in getting a solid foundation for freediving. The PADI Level One Freediver course is perfect for those who want to learn the fundamentals of freediving. It is intended to elevate the casual snorkeler or skin diver into a freediving enthusiast, so it emphasizes the specialized breathing techniques, equipment, procedures and safety issues associated with it. During the course, students will develop the knowledge and skills for a basic static apnea over 90 seconds, dynamic apnea to 25 meters/80 feet, and free immersion and constant weight freediving beyond 10 meters/33 feet. Students are guaranteed to leave this course with everything they need to know to casually freedive confidently, and, most importantly, safely! DATES: Weekends, days or evenings PRICES: £60-395 MINIMUM AGE: 12 years old for basic and 15 years+ for full course Caterham, S.E. London Brighton Mercers Lake or Malta. Please check when booking online or over the phone. Freediving is about inward power, discipline and control. If you've always wanted to enter the underwater world quietly, on your own terms, staying as long as your breath allows, then freediving is for you. Taking the PADI Freediver course is your first step toward discovering why freediving is becoming a popular way to explore beneath the waves. We are running a series of overseas trips to allow you to practice or complete courses in warmer waters: 22-29th January 2024. Basic to Advanced Freediver courses available as well as fun dives. Please e-mail holidays@oysterdiving.com for more details or to reserve your space. The PADI Basic Freediver course is a subset of the PADI Freediver course. It's a great first step for developing solid freediving skills. You learn basic freediving principles and focus on practicing breath-hold techniques in a pool or confined water site. In the PADI Basic Freediver course, you learn to use a mask, snorkel and fins, and may also use a wetsuit and weight belt. Using gear designed specifically for freediving is best, however, in this course, you may be able to use snorkelling equipment you already own. The PADI Basic Freediver course consists of two main phases: Knowledge Development about freediving principles through independent study with the PADIFreediver Touchä. (an Online app with videos & Quizzes, allowing you to do the theory at home before the pool session. Your instructor will be available to answer any questions or queries you may have as well) Confined Water Session to learn breath-hold techniques as well as static and dynamic apnea, plus proper buddying techniques. Goal – Static Apnea of 90 seconds Goal – Dynamic Apnea of 25m PADI Freediver Touch (includes Knowledge Development Reviews, Quizzes, Exams and Videos) All equipment hire Tuition by a PADI professional Freediving Instructor who are fully insured and adhere to UK HSE regulations PADI Certification Fee Small group sizes 1 day or 2 evenings tuition PADI Freediver Touch (includes Knowledge Development Reviews, Quizzes, Exams and Videos) All equipment hire Tuition by a PADI professional Freediving Instructor who are fully insured and adhere to UK HSE regulations PADI Certification Fee Small group sizes Freediving is about inward power, discipline and control. If you've always wanted to enter the underwater world quietly, on your own terms, staying as long as your breath allows, then freediving is for you. Taking the PADI Freediver course is your first step toward discovering why freediving is becoming a popular way to explore beneath the waves. The PADI Freediver course consists of three main phases: Knowledge Development about freediving principles through independent study with the PADI Freediver Touch. (an Online app with videos & Quizzes, allowing you to do the theory at home before the in-water sessions.) Confined Water Session to learn breath-hold techniques as well as static and dynamic apnea, plus proper buddying techniques. Goal – Static Apnea of 90 seconds Goal – Dynamic Apnea of 25m 2x Open Water Sessions (Can be done on one day) to introduce and practice both 'Free Immersion' (FIM) and 'Constant Weight' (CWT) freediving disciplines, plus proper buddy procedures. Goal – Constant Weight freedive of 10 metres. PADI Freediver Touch (includes Knowledge Development Reviews, Quizzes, Exams and Videos) All equipment hire for both Pool and Open water sessions Tuition by a PADI professional freediving instructor who are fully insured and adhere to UK HSE regulations PADI Certification Fee Small group sizes Be 15 Years old or older Demonstrate the ability to swim continuously on the surface for 200 metres without swimming aids or for 300m with mask, snorkel and fins. Complete the PADI Freediver Medical History Form, the PADI Freediver Program Release of Liability form and the PADI Freediver Safe Diving Practices Statement of Understanding Not sure what Freediving is all about, or which course is the right one for you. Watch our presentation to our Zoom audience. DATES: Weekends, days or evenings PRICE: £440 MINIMUM AGE: 15 years old Achieving a new freediving time or reaching a new depth is an incredible feeling. It satisfies that very personal desire to do your best and be proud of what you can accomplish. The PADI Advanced Freediver course is designed to fulfil that personal need to refine and improve your freediving skills, allowing you to progress slowly while learning how your body performs during apnea. The PADI Advanced Freediver course consists of three main elements: Knowledge Development about advanced freediving techniques and equipment through independent study with the PADI Freediver Touch. (an Online app with videos & Quizzes, allowing you to do the theory at home before the in-water sessions. Your instructor will be available to answer any questions or queries you may have as well) Confined Water Session to learn stretching and relaxation techniques as well as refine static and dynamic apnea. Goal – Static Apnea of 2 minutes, 30 seconds (2 minutes for freedivers younger than 18) Goal – Dynamic Apnea of 50m. (40m for freedivers younger than 18) 2 x Open Water Sessions (Can be done on one day) to practice deeper 'Free Immersion' (FIM) and 'Constant Weight' (CWT) dives, along with additional buddy procedures and rescue techniques. Goal – Constant Weight freedive of 20 metres. What's included? PADI Freediver Touch (includes Knowledge Development Reviews, Quizzes, Exams and Videos) All equipment hire for both Pool and Open water sessions Tuition by a PADI professional freediving instructor who are fully insured and adheres to UK HSE regulations PADI Certification Fee Small group sizes The PADI Advanced Freediver course consists of three main elements: Knowledge Development about advanced freediving techniques and equipment through independent study with the PADI Freediver Touch. (an Online app with videos & Quizzes, allowing you to do the theory at home before the in-water sessions. Your instructor will be available to answer any questions or queries you may have as well) Confined Water Session to learn stretching and relaxation techniques as well as refine static and dynamic apnea. Goal – Static Apnea of 2 minutes, 30 seconds (2 minutes for freedivers younger than 18) Goal – Dynamic Apnea of 50m. (40m for freedivers younger than 18) 2 x Open Water Sessions (Can be done on one day) to practice deeper 'Free Immersion' (FIM) and 'Constant Weight' (CWT) dives, along with additional buddy procedures and rescue techniques. Goal – Constant Weight freedive of 20 metres. What's included? PADI Freediver Touch (includes Knowledge Development Reviews, Quizzes, Exams and Videos) All equipment hire for both Pool and Open water sessions Tuition by a PADI professional freediving instructor who are fully insured and adheres to UK HSE regulations PADI Certification Fee Small group sizes Pre-Requisites Be 15 Years old or older Have a PADI Freediver certification (or a qualifying certification from another freediver organization) Complete the PADI Medical History Form, the PADI Freediver Program Release of Liability form and the PADI Freediver Safe Diving Practices Statement of Understanding We have several heated swimming pool times and locations to choose from so there is something convenient for you: Brighton – Sunday mornings South East London & Kent– Sunday mornings Join one of our group trips over a weekend to complete your PADI Freediver certification in the beautiful blue waters of Malta Join us our exclusive inland diving lake, Mercers country park during the summer months. To book your course or for more details please call 0800 699 0243. Snorkeling is the casual act of putting on a mask and snorkel and looking below while floating. Snorkelers may not have any training and generally spend most of the time on the surface. Skin diving takes snorkeling a step further by adding short dives underwater. Skin divers may have training that teaches skills, such as efficient dives and snorkel-clearing. Freediving uses advanced breathing techniques and diving skills to increase depth and time underwater. Through training, freedivers learn conserve oxygen while breathholding while practicing different freediving disciplines, such as static apnea, dynamic apnea, free immersion and constant weight freedives. The PADI Freediver course contains three phases – knowledge development, a confined water sessions and open water sessions. During knowledge development you learn about how your body reacts to breathholding and how water pressure affects you as you dive down. You also learn about freediving equipment, important safety rules and buddy procedures. In confined water, such as a swimming pool, you learn breathing techniques, then practice breathholds while floating (static apnea) and while swimming (dynamic apnea). You also practice basic rescue techniques and learn your role as a buddy. During at least two open water sessions, you practice diving down while breathholding, either by pulling yourself along a line (free immersion) or duck diving head first while following a line (constant weight). You learn to gradually increase your depths by relaxing and enjoying each dive. Rescue practice is another key part of the open water sessions. The PADI Freediver course is flexible and performance based, which means that your PADI dive shop and PADI Freediver Instructor can offer a wide variety of schedules, organized according to how fast you progress. Knowledge development is handled through independent study with the PADI Freediver TouchTM – an interactive tablet based app. You pace yourself as you work through each topic, then complete an overall Knowledge Review, then an Exam. There are at least three water sessions that will likely be scheduled on separate days. So, your training may take two to three days or longer. The recommended course duration is 15 hours. During confined and open water sessions, your PADI Freediver Instructor will focus on helping you become a confident and comfortable freediver, not on how long it takes. You earn your certification based on demonstrating you know what you need to know and can do what you need to do. This means that you progress at your own pace – faster or slower depending upon the time you need – to become a competent freediver. The minimum age is 15 years old for the PADI Freediver course and 12 years old for the PADI Basic Freediver certification. PADI Basic Freediver is a subset program on the PADI Freediver course that only includes knowledge development and a confined water session. All student divers complete a medical history form that asks about medical conditions that could be a problem while freediving. If none of these apply, sign the form and you're ready to start. If any of these apply to you, your doctor must, as a safety precaution, assess the condition as it relates to freediving and sign a medical form that confirms you're fit to dive. In some areas, local laws require all students to consult with a physician before entering the course. Download the PADI Freediver Medical History Form. Your PADI Freediver Instructor will have you demonstrate basic water skills to be sure you're comfortable in the water. This is a 200-metre/yard swim or 300-metre/yard swim using a mask, fins and snorkel without stopping. There is no time limit for this, and you may use any swimming strokes you want. Any individual who can meet the performance requirements of the course qualifies for certification. There are many adaptive techniques that allow individuals with physical challenges to meet these requirements. PADI Freediver course – Develops the knowledge and skills for basic static apnea, dynamic apnea, free immersion and constant weight freediving from 10-16 metres/30-55 feet. When completing open water training is not feasible or desirable, students complete just the knowledge and confined water skill portion of the PADI Freediver course (6 metres/20 feet maximum) to earn the PADI Basic Freediver rating. PADI Advanced Freediver course – Expands knowledge and skills, and with further development in static apnea, dynamic apnea, free immersion and constant weight freediving from 16-24 metres/55-80 feet. PADI Master Freediver course – Continues knowledge and skill development with further development in static apnea, dynamic apnea, free immersion and constant weight freediving from 24-40 metres/80-130 feet. Compared with other popular adventure sports and outdoor activities, learning to freedive isn't expensive. For example, you can expect to pay about the same as you would for: a full day of surfing lessons. a weekend of rock climbing lessons. a weekend of kayaking lessons. a weekend of fly-fishing lessons. about three hours of private golf lessons. about three hours of private water skiing lessons. one amazing night out at the pub! For specific costs, ask at the PADI dive shop where you'd like to get certified. All PADI Freediver Centers, along with scuba Dive Centers and Resorts are independently owned and operated, and prices can vary depending on location, class size and other factors. Some questions you may want to ask are: Are the course materials included in the price? What personal freedive equipment am I required to have? Are there any additional fees such as a boat fee? How many students will be in the course? Where will open water training sessions take place? Choosing and using your freediving gear is part of the fun. Your local PADI Freediver Center will help you find the right mask, snorkel and fins that are specifically designed for freediving. You may also want to get a freediving wet suit and weight system. There is no "best gear," but there is the best gear for you. The freedive professionals at your local PADI dive shop are trained to help you find equipment that best matches your preferences, fit and budget. All PADI Freediver Centers worldwide adhere to the same training standards, so no matter where you are there's likely a PADI Freediver Instructor ready to teach you. Decide where the best place for you is by contacting your local PADI dive shop to find out what options are available, ask friends and family, or check out the destinations on ScubaEarth®. No, assuming you have no irregularities in your ears and sinuses. The discomfort is the normal effect of water pressure pressing in on your ear drums. Fortunately, our bodies are designed to adjust for pressure changes in our ears – you just need to learn how. If you have no difficulties adjusting to air pressure during flying, you'll probably experience no problem learning to adjust to water pressure while freediving. Not necessarily. Any condition that affects the ears, sinuses, respiratory or heart function, or may alter consciousness is a concern, but only a doctor can assess a person's individual risk. Doctors can consult with the Divers Alert Network (DAN) as necessary when assessing fitness to dive. Download the PADI Freediver Medical History Form to take to your doctor. Sunburn, seasickness and dehydration, all of which are preventable, are the most common problems freedivers face. Injuries caused by not equalizing ears do occur, but these can be avoided by using proper technique and returning to the surface if your ears are not equalizing easily. As a freediver certified through another training organization, you can enroll in the next higher level in the PADI Freediver system after a skills and knowledge assessment by a PADI Freediver Instructor. The level you can enroll into depends on your current certification. Check with your PADI Regional Headquarters to confirm. Please contact your local PADI Dive Center or Resort. Underwater diving without breathing apparatus A freediver on the ocean floor Freediving, free-diving, free diving, breath-hold diving, or skin diving, is a mode of underwater diving that relies on breath-holding until resurfacing rather than the use of breathing apparatus such as scuba gear. Besides the limits of breath-hold, immersion in water and exposure to high ambient pressure also have physiological effects that limit the depths and duration possible in freediving. Examples of freediving activities are traditional fishing techniques, competitive and non-competitive freediving, competitive and non-competitive spearfishing and freediving photography, synchronised swimming, underwater football, underwater rugby, underwater hockey, underwater target shooting and snorkeling. There are also a range of "competitive apnea" disciplines; in which competitors attempt to attain great depths, times, or distances on a single breath. Historically, the term free diving was also used to refer to scuba diving, due to the freedom of movement compared with surface supplied diving.[1][2][3] See also: Sponge diving and Pearl hunting 9th century illustration of a pearl diver In ancient times freediving without the aid of mechanical devices was the only possibility, with the exception of the occasional use of reeds and leather breathing bladders.[4] The divers faced the same problems as divers today, such as blacking out during a breath hold. Freediving was practiced in ancient cultures to gather food, harvest resources such as sponge and pearl, reclaim sunken valuables, and to help aid military campaigns. In Ancient Greece, both Plato and Homer mention the sponge as being used for bathing. The island of Kalymnos was a main centre of diving for sponges. By using weights (skandalopetra) of as much as 15 kilograms (33 lb) to speed the descent, breath-holding divers would descend to depths up to 30 metres (98 ft) to collect sponges.[5] Harvesting of red coral was also done by divers.[citation needed] The Mediterranean had large amounts of maritime trade. As a result of shipwrecks, particularly in the fierce winter storms, divers were often hired to salvage whatever they could from the seabed.[6] Divers would swim down to the wreck and choose the most valuable pieces to salvage. Divers were also used in warfare. Defenses against sea vessels were often created, such as underwater barricades, and hence divers were often used to scout out the seabed when ships were approaching an enemy harbor. If barricades were found, it was divers who were used to disassemble them, if possible.[7] During the Peloponnesian War, divers were used to get past enemy blockades to relay messages as well as supplies to allies or troops that were cut off,[8] and in 332 BC, during the Siege of Tyre, the city used divers to cut the anchor cables of Alexander's attacking ships.[9] In Japan, ama divers began to collect pearls about 2,000 years ago.[10][11] For thousands of years, most seawater pearls were retrieved by divers working in the Indian Ocean, in areas such as the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and in the Gulf of Mannar (between Sri Lanka and India).[12] A fragment of Isidore of Charax's Parthian itinerary was preserved in Athenaeus's 3rd-century Sophists at Dinner, recording freediving for pearls around an island in the Persian Gulf.[13] Pearl divers near the Philippines were also successful at harvesting large pearls, especially in the Sulu Archipelago. At times, the largest pearls belonged by law to the sultan, and selling them could result in the death penalty for the seller. Nonetheless, many pearls made it out of the archipelago by stealth, ending up in the possession of the wealthiest families in Europe.[14] Pearling was popular in Qatar, Bahrain, Japan, and India. The Gulf of Mexico was also known for pearling. Native Americans harvested freshwater pearls from lakes and rivers like the Ohio, Tennessee, and Mississippi, while others dived for marine pearls from the Caribbean and waters along the coasts of Central and South America. In 1940, Dottie Frazier pioneered freediving for women in the United States and also began teaching classes. It was also during this time that she began to design and sell rubber suits for Navy UDT divers.[15] Spearfishing is an ancient method of fishing that has been used throughout the world for millennia. Early civilizations were familiar with the custom of spearing fish from rivers and streams using sharpened sticks. Today modern spearfishing makes use of elastic powered spearguns and slings, or compressed gas pneumatic powered spearguns, to strike the hunted fish. Specialised techniques and equipment have been developed for various types of aquatic environments and target fish. Spearfishing may be done using free-diving, snorkelling, or scuba diving techniques. Spearfishing while using scuba equipment is illegal in some countries. The use of mechanically powered spearguns[clarification needed] is also outlawed in some countries and jurisdictions.[citation needed] Spearfishing is highly selective, normally uses no bait and has limited by-catch. Various cultures have collected shellfish by freediving for "possibly thousands" of years.[16][17][18] One example is the historical recreational collection of abalone in South Africa, before illegal harvesting reduced stocks to levels which resulted in recreational collection being banned indefinitely. This did not completely stop illegal harvesting, because selling illegally harvested abalone remained lucrative.[19] Aquathlon (also known as underwater wrestling) is an underwater sport where two competitors wearing masks and fins wrestle underwater in an attempt to remove a ribbon from each other's ankle band in order to win the bout. The "combat" takes place in a 5-metre (16 ft) square ring within a swimming pool, and is made up of three 30-second rounds, with a fourth round played in the event of a tie. The sport originated during the 1980s in the former USSR (now Russia) and was first played at international level in 1993. It was recognised by the Confédération Mondiale des Activités Subaquatiques (CMAS) in 2008.[20][21][22][23] Competitive spearfishing is defined by the world governing body CMAS as "the hunting and capture of fish underwater without the aid of artificial breathing devices, using gear that depends entirely on the physical strength of the competitor." They publish a set of competition rules that are used by affiliated organisations.[24][25] A member of the Japanese team is thrown up in the air by other members under the water during the team's free routine at the 2013 French Open. Synchronized swimming is a hybrid form of swimming, dance, and gymnastics, consisting of swimmers (either solos, duets, trios, combos, or teams) performing a synchronized routine of elaborate moves in the water, accompanied by music. Synchronized swimming demands advanced water skills, and requires great strength, endurance, flexibility, grace, artistry and precise timing, as well as exceptional breath control when upside down underwater. During lifts swimmers are not allowed to touch the bottom.[citation needed] Traditionally it was a women's sport, but following the addition of a new mixed-pair event, FINA World Aquatics competitions are open to men since the 16th 2015 championships in Kazan, and the other international and national competitions allow male competitors in every event. However, men are currently still barred from competing in the Olympics. Both USA Synchro and Synchro Canada allow men to compete with women. Most European countries also allow men to compete, and France even allows male only podiums, according to the number of participants. In the past decade, more men are becoming involved in the sport and a global biannual competition called Men's Cup has been steadily growing.[citation needed] Swimmers perform two routines for the judges, one technical and one free, as well as age group routines and figures. Synchronized swimming is both an individual and team sport. Swimmers compete individually during figures, and then as a team during the routine. Figures are made up of a combination of skills and positions that often require control, strength, and flexibility. Swimmers are ranked individually for this part of the competition. The routine involves teamwork and synchronization. It is choreographed to music and often has a theme. Synchronized swimming is governed internationally by FINA (Fédération Internationale de Natation). Two players compete for the puck in underwater hockey Underwater hockey (also called octopush, mainly in the United Kingdom) is a globally played limited-contact sport in which two teams compete to manoeuvre a hockey puck across the bottom of a swimming pool into the opposing team's goal by propelling it with a hockey stick. The sport originated in England in 1954 when Alan Blake, the founder of the newly formed Southsea Sub-Aqua Club, invented the game he called octopush to keep the club's members interested and active during the cold winter months, when open-water diving lost its appeal.[26] Underwater hockey is now played worldwide, governed by the Confédération Mondiale des Activités Subaquatiques (CMAS).[27] The first Underwater Hockey World Championship was held in Canada in 1980, after a planned championship in 1979 was scuttled by international politics and apartheid.[citation needed] US Navy Students playing underwater football Underwater football is a two-team underwater sport that shares common elements with underwater hockey and underwater rugby. As with both of those games, it is played in a swimming pool with snorkeling equipment (mask, snorkel, and fins). The goal of the game is to manoeuvre (by carrying and passing) a slightly negatively buoyant ball from one side of a pool to the other by players who are completely submerged underwater. Scoring is achieved by placing the ball (under control) in the gutter on the side of the pool. Variations include using a toy rubber torpedo as the ball, and weighing down buckets to rest on the bottom and serve as goals.[citation needed] It is played in the Canadian provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Saskatchewan.[28] Underwater rugby is an underwater team sport. During a match, two teams try to score a negatively buoyant ball (filled with saltwater) into the opponents' goal at the bottom of a swimming pool. It originated from within the physical fitness training regime existing in German diving clubs during the early 1960s and has little in common with rugby football except for the name. It was recognised by the Confédération Mondiale des Activités Subaquatiques (CMAS) in 1978 and was first played as a world championship in 1980.[citation needed] Underwater target shooting is an underwater sport that tests a competitors' ability to accurately use a speargun via a set of individual and team events conducted in a swimming pool using free diving or apnea technique. The sport was developed in France during the early 1980s and is currently practised mainly in Europe. It is known as Tir sur cible subaquatique in French and as Tiro al Blanco Subacuático in Spanish. Monofin freediver Competitive freediving is currently governed by two world associations: AIDA International[29] and Confédération Mondiale des Activités Subaquatiques (CMAS). Historically, there were two more organisations that regulated freediving records and activities — International Association of Freedivers (IAFD) and Freediving Regulations and Education Entity (FREE).[30][31] Each organization has its own rules on recognizing a record attempt which can be found on the organization's website. Alongside competitive disciplines, there are record disciplines — disciplines that are not held in competitions, that are just for setting world records. There is a third organization, Guinness, which in addition to AIDA and CMAS presides over record disciplines.[citation needed] Almost all types of competitive freediving are individual sports based on the best individual achievement. Exceptions to this rule are the bi-annual AIDA Team World Championship, where the combined score of the team members makes up the team's total points, and Skandalopetra diving competitions held by CMAS, the only truly 'team' event in freediving for which teams are formed by two athletes: one acting as the diver (βουτηχτής, voutichtis) and the other acting as an assistant (κολαουζέρης, kolaouzeris). There are currently eleven recognized disciplines defined by AIDA and CMAS, and a dozen more that are only practiced locally.[clarification needed][citation needed] All disciplines can be practiced by both men and women, and only CMAS currently separates records in fresh water from those at sea. The disciplines of AIDA can be done both in competition and as a record attempt, with the exception of variable weight and no limits, which are both solely for record attempts. For all AIDA depth disciplines, the depth the athlete will attempt is announced before the dive; this is accepted practice for both competition and record attempts. Most divers choose monofin (MF) over bifins (BF) where there is a choice. Discipline Measurement AIDA[32] CMAS[33] Description open water pool open water pool Constant weight apnea (CWT) depth Y – Y – Maximum depth following a guide line. The line to act solely as a guide and only a single hold of the rope to stop the descent and start the ascent is permitted. Dropping dive weights is not permitted. Both bi-fins and monofin are permitted and the technique is irrelevant. Constant weight bi-fins (CWT BF, CWTB) depth Y – Y – As for CWT above but monofins are not permitted and the athlete is prohibited to use a dolphin kick for his / her propulsion. Constant weight without fins (CNF) depth Y – Y – As for CWT above but no swimming aids such as fins are permitted. This discipline is the most recently recognised discipline having been recognised by AIDA since 2003. Dynamic apnea without fins (DNF) horizontal distance – Y Y Y Maximum distance underwater, in a pool, no swimming aids such as fins are permitted (AIDA). Dynamic apnea with fins (DYN) horizontal distance – Y Y Y Maximum horizontal distance on one breath in a pool. Monofin or bi-fins are permitted and the technique is irrelevant. Dynamic apnea with bifins (DYN BF, DYNB) horizontal distance – Y – Y Same as DYN above but monofins are not permitted and the athlete is prohibited to use a dolphin kick for his / her propulsion. Free immersion apnea (FIM) depth Y – Y – Maximum depth following a vertical line. The line may be used to pull down to depth and back to the surface. No ballast or fins are permitted. It is known for its ease compared with the Constant Weight disciplines, while still not permitting the release of weights. Jump blue (JB, also the cube) horizontal distance N Y – Maximum distance covered around a 15-metre square at a depth of 10 metres. Monofin, bi-fins or no fins are all permitted. Sled may be used for descent. No-limits apnea (NLT) depth Y – N Any means of breath-hold diving to depth and return to the surface is permitted provided that a guideline is used to measure the distance. Most divers use a weighted sled to descend and an inflatable bag to ascend. It is important to note that new attempts are not recognised due to the level of danger presented to divers[34] Skandalopetra depth & min. time N Y – The only true team event in freediving. Diver 1 descends, usually assisted by a stone or marble slab attached to a rope, while Diver 2 waits on the surface. Diver 1 reaches the target depth and is hauled to the surface by Diver 2 using only muscle power. No diving mask, suit or fins are permitted, only nose clip. Static apnea (STA) max. time Y Y Y Y Timed breathhold endurance while floating on the surface or standing on the bottom. Usually in a pool. Static apnea with pure oxygen (STA O2) max. time N N Timed breathhold endurance, pre-breathing 100% oxygen for up to 30 minutes prior to the breathhold is permitted. Usually in a pool. Although no longer recognised by either AIDA or CMAS there were three instances of records being approved by AIDA. Speed-endurance apnea (S&E apnea)[35] min. time N – Y Shortest time over a fixed, underwater distance. An endurance sub-discipline is swum in fractions of a pool length alternating apnoea swimming with passive recovery at the intervals. Disciplines are SPE – 100m speed apnoea, END 16x50 – 800m and END 8x50 – 400m endurance apnoea. Variable weight apnea without fins (VNF) depth N Y – Descent is assisted by a weighted sled sliding down a line, the ascent may be by pulling up along the line or swimming without fins. Variable weight apnea (VWT) depth Y – Y – Descent is assisted by a weighted sled sliding down a line, the ascent may be either by:1.) pulling up along the line or swimming with or without fins under AIDA rules2.) swimming with fins under CMAS rules. Herbert Nitsch, World Record Holder Freediver Overview of the above disciplines[36][37][35] Discipline Aids permitted Weightchangepermitted? Descent Ascent CNF Noneor weight None No CWT BF / MFand/or weight BF / MF No CWT BF BFand/or weight BF No DNF – – – DYN – – – DYN BF – – – FIM Rope or none Rope or none No JB Sled and/orBF / MF or none BF / MF or none Sled only NLT (No Limit) (Only AIDA) Any Any Yes Skandalopetra Stone Hauled up Yes STA – – – STA O2 – – – S&E Apnoea – – – VNF (only CMAS) Sled Rope or none Yes VWT Sled BF / MF or rope Yes Following the deaths of two freedivers in competitions, AIDA has a system set up for monitoring and if necessary, recovering competitors who lose consciousness underwater. As of 2022 the incidence of adverse events in depth competitions varies between 3 and 4%. This rate is considered relatively low and is expected during competitions where divers push their breath-hold limits. Almost all of these divers are successfully assisted and recover completely. There is a much lower incidence of more serious injuries.[38] Deep safety principles for freediving with counter weight The safety team is usually made up of volunteers, or paid staff in some major events, and is supervised by the Chief of Safety. Each competitor is monitored by a team of breath-hold safety divers who will descend in time to meet the competitor during their ascent, and monitor them for the rest of the ascent. They will intervene if necessary, typically by securing the competitor's airway and swimming them up to the surface. The first safety diver will meet the competitor at somewhere around 1/3 to 1/4 of the target dep

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