

— OCEAN CALLING RETREATS — EDUCATIONAL GUIDE —

Introduction to

Freediving *the breath.*

&

Scuba Diving

*A complete guide to certifications, techniques, and finding the
path beneath the surface that feels like yours.*

Rocío Ruiz

FOUNDER · OCEAN CALLING RETREATS

Two ways to *explore* the same ocean

Freediving speaks in breath and stillness. Scuba speaks in time and exploration. This guide helps you understand both clearly – how they work, what training looks like at every level, and which path fits who you are.

<h2>01</h2>  <h3>Freediving</h3> <p>A single breath. No tank, no noise – just your body and the ocean. Freediving rewards calm, awareness, and natural movement. With proper training, comfortable depths of 10–20 m and beyond are entirely achievable.</p>	<h2>02</h2>  <h3>Scuba Diving</h3> <p>A self-contained air system that lets you breathe normally at depth, staying underwater for extended periods. Ideal for long, observation-based dives on reefs and wrecks. Entry-level certs qualify to 18 m.</p>	<h2>∞</h2>  <h3>Or both</h3> <p>Many divers practise both – they are complementary skills. Freediving builds breathwork and body control that makes scuba richer. Scuba builds confidence with depth that makes freediving calmer.</p>
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	FREEDIVING	SCUBA DIVING
EQUIPMENT	Minimal – mask, fins, wetsuit	Full kit – tank, BCD, regulator
STYLE	Silent, meditative, flowing	Slow, observational, extended
BEGINNER DEPTH	10 – 20 m	12 – 18 m
TIME UNDERWATER	Seconds to a few minutes	30 – 60 minutes per tank
BEST FOR	Focus, natural movement, photography	Extended exploration, wrecks, macro life
ENTRY INVESTMENT	Lower – less gear required	Moderate to higher

Progress in diving is not defined by depth alone, but by a combination of technical skill, emotional comfort, clear safety, and the right choice of location and coaching.

ROCÍO RUIZ — FOUNDER, OCEAN CALLING RETREATS

— SCUBA DIVING

Scuba *certification* paths

Two major systems — PADI and SSI — offer internationally recognised, step-by-step progression. Both are accepted at dive centres worldwide.

- 1 Open Water Diver**
Buoyancy control, equipment handling, and safety procedures. The foundational cert — dive worldwide to 18 m with a buddy.

Depth: 18 m 2–4 days

- 2 Advanced Open Water Diver**
Choose specialties — Deep, Navigation, Night, Wreck, or Underwater Photography. Broadens experience in chosen directions.

Depth: 30 m

- 3 Rescue Diver**
Stress recognition, incident prevention, and emergency response. A turning point for any serious diver.

- 4 Master Scuba Diver**
PADI's highest non-professional rating. Multiple specialties and a substantial dive log — a mark of real commitment.

- 1 Open Water Diver**
Equivalent to PADI Open Water — same 18 m depth rating with flexible, fully digital course materials.

Depth: 18 m

- 2 Advanced Adventurer / AOW**
Choose your own specialty dives rather than a fixed programme. More flexible than PADI's structured course.

Depth: 30 m

- 3 Stress & Rescue**
Emergency recognition, prevention, and safe rescue techniques — essential for independent, confident diving.

- 4 Dive Guide / Divemaster**
Professional-level training — lead groups, supervise dives, and assist instructors in the water.

18m

OPEN WATER DEPTH
LIMIT

30m

ADVANCED CERT
DEPTH

40m

DEEP SPECIALTY
LIMIT

2-4

DAYS FOR OPEN
WATER CERT

— FREEDIVING

Freediving *certification* paths

Four major systems offer clear progression from total beginner to expert level. All are respected worldwide — the right choice depends on where you train and your long-term goals.

AIDA International

MOST RECOGNISED GLOBALLY

1

AIDA 1 — Introduction

Breathing, relaxation, equalisation basics, safety theory.
Gentle entry — no strict performance targets.

2

AIDA 2 — Beginner

First real certification with performance goals.

Static ~2:00

Dynamic ~40 m

Depth 16–20 m

3

AIDA 3 — Intermediate

Deeper dives, longer holds, full rescue protocols.

Static ~2:45

Dynamic ~55 m

Depth 24–30 m

4

AIDA 4 — Advanced

High-performance targets for dedicated freedivers.

Static ~3:30

Dynamic ~70 m

Depth 32–38 m

Molchanovs Wave

MODERN & TECHNICAL

W1

Wave 1 — Beginner

Integrates depth, pool, and dry training from day one.
Created by world-record freedivers.

Static ~1:30

Dynamic ~30 m

Depth 12–20 m

W2

Wave 2 — Intermediate

Refined technique across all disciplines with progressive structure.

Static ~2:30

Dynamic ~50 m

Depth 24–30 m

W3

Wave 3 — Advanced

Serious depth and pool performance, detailed coaching at every point.

Static ~3:30

Dynamic ~70 m

Depth 34–40 m

W4

Wave 4 — Expert / Instructor Track

Designed for high-performance divers and future freediving instructors.

PADI Freediver

ONE AGENCY

1

PADI Freediver

Wide availability, especially at centres that already teach PADI scuba.

Static ~1:30

Dynamic ~25 m

Depth 10–16 m

2

PADI Advanced Freediver

Static ~2:30

Dynamic ~50 m

Depth 20–24 m

3

PADI Master Freediver

The highest PADI freediving certification, recognised at any PADI dive centre worldwide.

Static ~3:30

Dynamic ~70 m

Depth 32–40 m

SSI Freediving

SIMPLE & ACCESSIBLE

1

SSI Freediving Level 1

Wide availability, especially at centres that already teach SSI scuba.

Static ~1:30

Dynamic ~30 m

Depth 10–20 m

2

SSI Freediving Level 2

Static ~2:30

Dynamic ~50 m

Depth 20–30 m

3

SSI Freediving Level 3

Static ~3:30

Dynamic ~70 m

Depth 30–40 m

— WHAT ACTUALLY MATTERS

Beyond the *numbers*

Certification levels tell only part of the story. Real mastery shows up in calmness, efficiency, and the ability to read your own body underwater.



Equalisation

Often the most important skill to develop. Frenzel technique, advanced methods, and voluntary tubal opening each require different amounts of practice. Dry training before water helps enormously.



Breath-hold

Improves with relaxation, correct breathing patterns, and repetition. Progress comes from calmness, not force. Pushing through discomfort is never the answer in freediving.



Mind & Body

Freediving is as much mental as physical. Learning to sit with discomfort, quiet the mind, and trust the body are skills that develop slowly — and carry into daily life long after the dive.

— FREEDIVING DISCIPLINES

Six ways to *move* through water

Freediving is not a single skill. Each discipline demands different training — and most divers progress unevenly across them. This is completely normal.

- **Bifins — Constant Weight (CWTB)**

The most common freediving discipline. Long, flexible bifins provide efficient propulsion for depth diving. Most certification programmes use this as their primary depth discipline.

- **No-Fins — CNF**

Propulsion using only body movement — no fins at all. Requires strong technique, dolphin-kick mechanics, and significant core strength. Humbling for any diver, rewarding to develop.

- **Free Immersion — FIM**

Pulling down and up a vertical dive line using the arms. Removes the finning variable, which many divers find liberating — especially those working on equalisation.

- **Static Apnea**

Breath-hold at the surface or in a pool, face-down, for as long as possible. Purely about stillness and the mind. The discipline most directly tied to mental training and breathwork practice.

● Dynamic Apnea

Maximum horizontal distance underwater on a single breath, typically in a pool. Combines technique, efficiency, and breath-hold endurance. Excellent training for open-water depth divers.

● Equalisation

Not a separate discipline, but a foundational skill that runs through all of them. Frenzel, mouthfill, and voluntary tubal opening each unlock different depth ranges. Dry practice accelerates development significantly.

— SAFETY

Non-negotiable *rules*

Both freediving and scuba are safe when taught properly. These rules are not guidelines — they are the foundation of every safe dive.



Freediving Safety

- Always dive with a trained buddy — never alone, without exception
- Never hyperventilate before a dive — shallow-water blackout is real and preventable
- Practise rescue procedures at every certification level
- Learn to recognise signs of hypoxia in your buddy before they do
- Rest fully between dives — at least twice your dive time at the surface



Scuba Safety

- Ascend slowly — maximum 9 metres per minute
- Always complete safety stops at 5 m for 3 minutes minimum
- Never hold your breath while ascending — the most critical scuba rule
- Plan your dive and dive your plan — know your limits before entering
- Check your equipment thoroughly before every single dive



Both Sports

- Dive only within your current certification limits
- Know the local conditions — currents, depth, hazards — before entering
- Never dive when unwell, heavily medicated, or fatigued
- The right environment accelerates learning — warm, clear, calm water matters
- A good instructor changes everything — calm, attentive, and safety-first always

— ETHICAL OCEAN RETREATS

Ready to *begin?*

*Small-group experiences built on depth, safety,
and meaningful connection to the ocean.*

WEBSITE

oceancallingretreats.com



EMAIL

hello@oceancallingretreats.com



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+60 17 506 3408



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