

# OPEN WATER TRAINING



**OPEN WATER FREEDIVER +  
FOUNDATION FREEDIVER**

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# OPEN WATER TRAINING

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for completing each level are listed below.

## FOUNDATION FREEDIVER – OPEN WATER SKILLS

The Foundation certification is achieved without a specific depth requirement. It focuses on providing a solid base from which to develop your abilities, and to safely supervise a fellow diver.

By the end of your open water sessions, you should be able to perform the following:

1. **Correct weighting for freediving in open water**

The diver should be positively buoyant, airways remaining out of the water, in a vertical position with arms and legs held motionless (arms against the sides, legs straight and together). In this configuration you should be neutrally buoyant on full lungs at about 10 meters/33 feet.

2. **Correct use of a freediving buoy and rope**

Make correct use of a freediving buoy as a surface marker, diver down flag attachment point, resting area, and guide rope attachment point.

3. **Correct freediving buddy safety system - surface buddying**

Demonstrate your understanding of the buddy safety system for freediving, including the correct supervision of a diver, and correct buddying procedure at the surface.

4. **Perform correct breathing for freediving**

Employ safe and appropriate breathing techniques for freediving. These include passive-relaxation breathing, a full pre-dive breath, correct use of the snorkel, and correct recovery breathing. Avoid hyperventilation.

5. **Perform proper equalization techniques on descent**

Understand and implement correct equalization techniques, equalizing the ears, sinuses and mask while freediving head or feet first.

6. **Perform a free immersion (FIM) dive**

Demonstrate a FIM dive either head or feet first, while equalizing regularly.

7. **Perform a correct black out and a hypoxic fit rescue scenario on the surface**

Rescue a freediver on the surface suffering a black out or hypoxic fit.

8. **Perform cramp removal**

Demonstrate techniques to relieve leg or foot cramps on your buddy and yourself.

9. **Perform a tired diver and an unconscious dive tow**

Allow a tired diver to rest while pushing him or her along by the feet. Also tow an unconscious freediver using head support, ensuring their airways are out of the water at all times, for a minimum of 10 meters/33 feet.

10. **All dive sessions logged online**

All freedive sessions completed on the RAID Foundation Freediver Course will be logged by the candidate on their RAID profile on the RAID website.



## OPEN WATER FREEDIVER – OPEN WATER SKILLS

All Foundation Freediver skills must have been passed and met. In addition, you should be able to demonstrate the following:

- 1. Demonstrate proper surface entry technique with equalization to depth**  
Consistently perform the stages of a duck dive, including pre-equalization, removing the snorkel, and further equalization as needed, maintaining correct body positioning and movement throughout.
- 2. Perform proper equalization techniques on descent headfirst**  
Properly equalize your ears, sinuses, and mask, while freediving headfirst using constant weight (CWT) and free immersion (FIM) techniques.
- 3. Perform a free immersion freedive**  
Perform a free immersion dive to a minimum depth of 10 meters/33 feet, with correct technique and body positioning, using positive buoyancy on the ascent.
- 4. Perform a duck dive and CWT freedive to a minimum of 10 meters or 33 feet using bi-fins**  
Demonstrate a CWT dive with correct surface entry protocol ('duck dive'), to a depth of 10 meters / 33 feet; maintaining proper equalization, finning technique, and body positioning throughout. Remember to let positive buoyancy carry you during the ascent.
- 5. Perform a shallow water black out (SWB) rescue of a freediver from a minimum depth of 10 meters / 33 feet**  
Complete a CWT dive, with proper surface entry and finning technique, to retrieve a simulated unconscious diver at a minimum depth of 10 meters / 33 feet. Secure the diver's airways while underwater and remain oriented to the dive line during ascent. At the surface remain near the buoy as you support the diver's airways clear of the water, remove their mask, and implement the blow, tap, talk protocol to revive them.
- 6. Correct freediving buddy safety system from a minimum depth of 10 meters / 33 feet**  
Demonstrate consistent and correct buddying for a freediver from at least 10 meters depth. Maintain eye contact, remaining no more than 1.5 meters from the diver during ascent, followed by the correct buddy procedures at the surface.
- 7. Perform a proper and safe bottom turn technique at 10 meters depth**  
This turn is executed by gripping the line with one hand during descent, allowing the body to fall into alignment, then giving one pull to begin the ascent. Remain aware at all times of your position relative to the line to avoid any risk of entanglement.
- 8. Demonstrate good line orientation and situational awareness while diving**  
Show an awareness of your buddy, fellow divers, and your surroundings, both under the water and at the surface. While line diving, remain no more than one meter away from the freediving line.
- 9. All dive sessions logged online**  
All freedive sessions completed on the RAID Open Water Freediver Course have been logged by the candidate on their RAID profile on the RAID website.

When you've successfully completed all of the above you will be ready to safely enjoy recreational freediving with a qualified buddy. Freediving is an incredibly relaxing and beautiful hobby that will stay with you for the rest of your life.

## TECHNIQUE

Refining your swimming and surface entry skills will greatly enhance your freediving experience. In time you'll learn to use no more effort than absolutely needed, while remaining hydrodynamically efficient.

In the following sections we'll discuss various aspects of line-diving methods and protocol.

### FREE IMMERSION TECHNIQUE

In Free Immersion we use our arms to descend and ascend by pulling on a dive line. The key to efficient Free Immersion technique is to remain as streamlined as possible.

Facing the dive line, bring one arm up to grip the line as far as you can reach above your head. As you bring the arm up, keep your elbow in close to your body to minimize drag. The other arm rests along your body with your hand resting on or near your thigh or on your nose for frequent equalization. Stay as close to the line as possible as you pull with your lead arm. Maintaining a good streamline, bring the other arm up close to your body and reach to grip the line above you as the pulling arm lets go and comes to rest near your thigh. As either hand (up to you!) moves past your face, pinch your nose, and equalize. Pace yourself so you don't get ahead of your ability to equalize.

Repeat this motion until you reach your target depth, become negatively buoyant and can let yourself fall, or have achieved positive buoyancy on the way up. Keep your legs relaxed and together throughout.

To maintain a good streamline, stay focused on the line directly in front of you. Looking where you're going will cause you to arch your neck and back, creating equalization problems and drag.

### CONSTANT WEIGHT

**RAID NOTE:** As we discussed in the **Confined Water Training** manual, freedivers use a modified version of the flutter kick.

We will be using bi-fins during the RAID Foundation and Open Water Freediver course.

It's important to use the fins in the most efficient way possible. This is achieved by ensuring that the movement comes from your hips, keeping your knees as straight as possible and toes pointed. The kick should be a wide amplitude and equal in amplitude front-to-back. This ensures the maximum efficiency of the fin blades.

The most common mistake when using bi-fins is to use a "cycling" motion with your legs. The fins will not propel you forward when moving in this way. Try to keep your legs as straight as possible and use large amplitude, un-hurried kicks.

### RELAXATION STAGE - LINE DIVING

Body position, relaxation and breathing are covered in previous sections of this manual. In this chapter we'll discuss surface protocol when diving with a line and buoy.

During the relaxation stage line diving you'll hold onto either the float or line as you relax and prepare to dive. Remain as relaxed as possible and proceed as follows so the dive line will be in sight when you bend at the waist to begin your duck dive.

If current and/or waves are not a concern, hold the dive line to one side of your body at about waist level until you're ready to dive.

In waves or currents, let your body fall into alignment behind the line - lightly gripping it above your head. When the time comes to dive, pull yourself forward until your head and upper body are past the line. Use the forward momentum to begin your duck-dive while keeping the dive line in sight directly in front of you. The guiding principles throughout are minimizing effort and staying relaxed.

Your instructor will guide you through the process of preparing for and executing your line dives.



### DUCK DIVE (CONSTANT WEIGHT ONLY)

A smooth and efficient duck dive saves a great deal of energy during the first part of your dive.

#### THE PREPARATION

1. Fill outer ears/hood with water.
2. Pre-dive breath.
3. Take your snorkel out of your mouth.
4. Equalize once on the surface (Pre-equalize).

#### THE DUCK DIVE

**1. Arms down**

Reach your extended arms, followed by your head, below the surface as if you are trying to reach the bottom of a swimming pool. Your upper body should end up at a 90° angle to your legs. The movement should be definite and confident.

**2. Legs Up**

Lift your legs vertically into the air, so that your fins, legs, body and head are all in a straight line down the freediving line. Do not bend your knees.

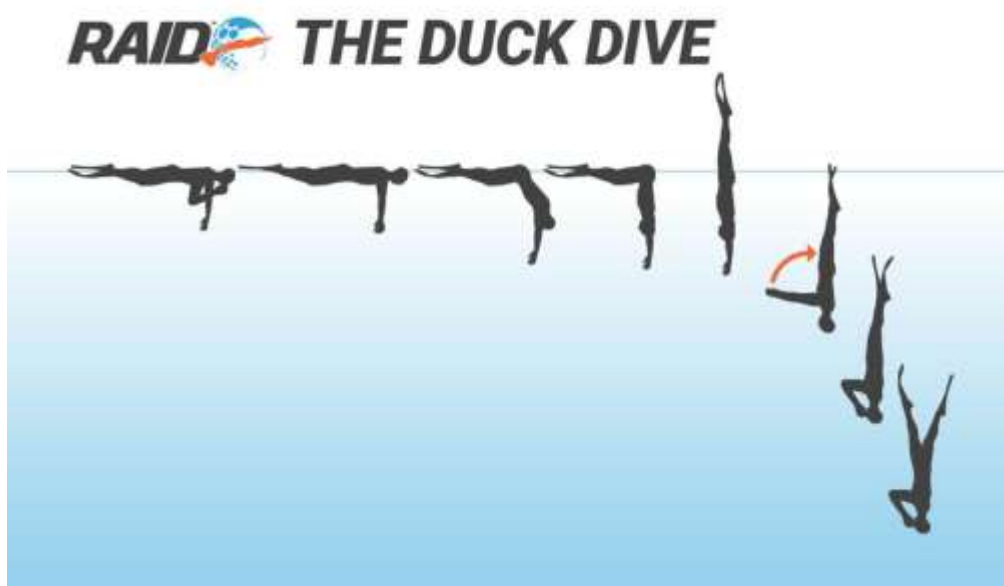
**3. Arm pull**

Perform a single arm stroke from above your head all the way to your waist. Immediately move one hand to your nose to equalize.

**4. Legs**

If you have done the previous steps correctly, your fins will be submerged beneath the surface. At this point start finning to propel your body downward.

If you are using a dive line, your duck dive should leave you facing the line. Keep your head level - looking directly at the line in front of you. A good duck dive lets gravity do most of the work as you begin your descent, conserving energy for the rest of your dive. With time and practice it will become nearly effortless, and greatly enhance your freediving experience.



### DESCENT AND ORIENTATION TO A DIVE LINE

As you descend your body becomes less buoyant. This part of the dive is known as the 'sink phase' or 'freefall'. It's a great opportunity to stop finning and focus on relaxation and alignment.

Equalization during descent is continuous and should take place roughly every meter. Failure to equalize promptly and consistently creates inflammation around the eustachian tubes that will make it more and more difficult.

Keep your head and neck aligned with your spine - looking at the dive line directly in front of you.

Arching your neck to look where you are going will cause the following problems:

- You will be less hydrodynamic.
- It can make equalization harder.
- You'll be fighting your own body to maintain a straight descent.

Your body should be parallel to the freediving line. Keep one arm touching the upper part of your thigh and use the other for equalization. Tuck the elbow of the equalizing arm into your chest for minimal drag.

Using a lanyard can be helpful. If you get out of vertical alignment and wander from the line, you'll feel drag from the lanyard.

Keep the line in easy reach throughout the dive. Running it through your finger and thumb can help you stay oriented.

Avoid gripping the dive line unless you are either turning for the surface, or otherwise need to stop.

### BOTTOM TURN

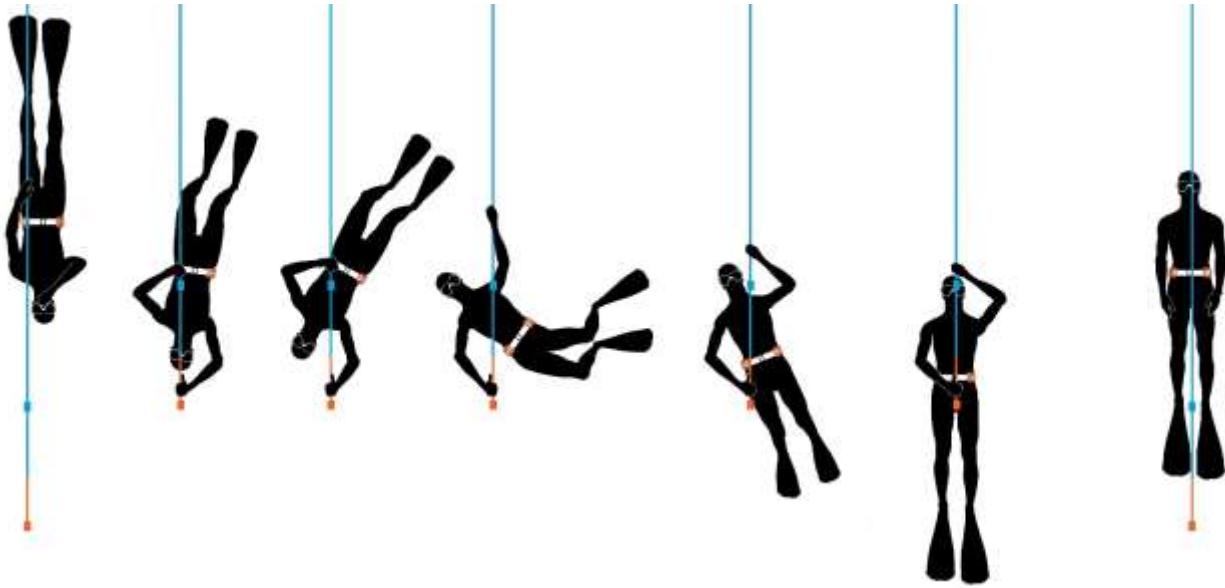
When you're ready to return to the surface during a line drive, grip the line with one hand and allow your body to fall into alignment for the trip up. Avoid arching your back or neck - maintaining straight, relaxed, body alignment, keeping the dive line in sight, and avoiding unnecessary or sudden movements.

Turn to the side of the line, not into it or away from it to reduce the risk of entanglement.

Sudden strenuous or stretching movements when the lungs are compressed at depth increase the risk of lung squeeze. The chance of this occurring at the working depths for this class are remote, but establishing safe habits now will serve you well as your abilities expand.

Take your time and keep the line in sight and at arm's length to avoid any risk of entanglement.





## ASCENT

Start your ascent with a single pull on the line. This will give you some initial thrust and serve as a signal to your dive buddy that you've made your turn. After the pull you have the option of keeping your arm extended above your head with the line flowing through between thumb and forefinger.

During ascent there is no need to equalize.

Kick to overcome negative buoyancy for the first part of your ascent. Once you become positively buoyant, relax and let yourself float to the surface.

Focus on maintaining good form and relaxation throughout the ascent.

Avoid looking at your dive watch. You can review the details at the surface after you've completed the recovery protocols.

## ENDING THE DIVE

Once you reach the surface do not exhale until you have a grip on the float. Hold onto it for support, ensuring that your airways do not dip beneath the surface. Follow the checklist below before speaking, looking around or checking your dive computer.

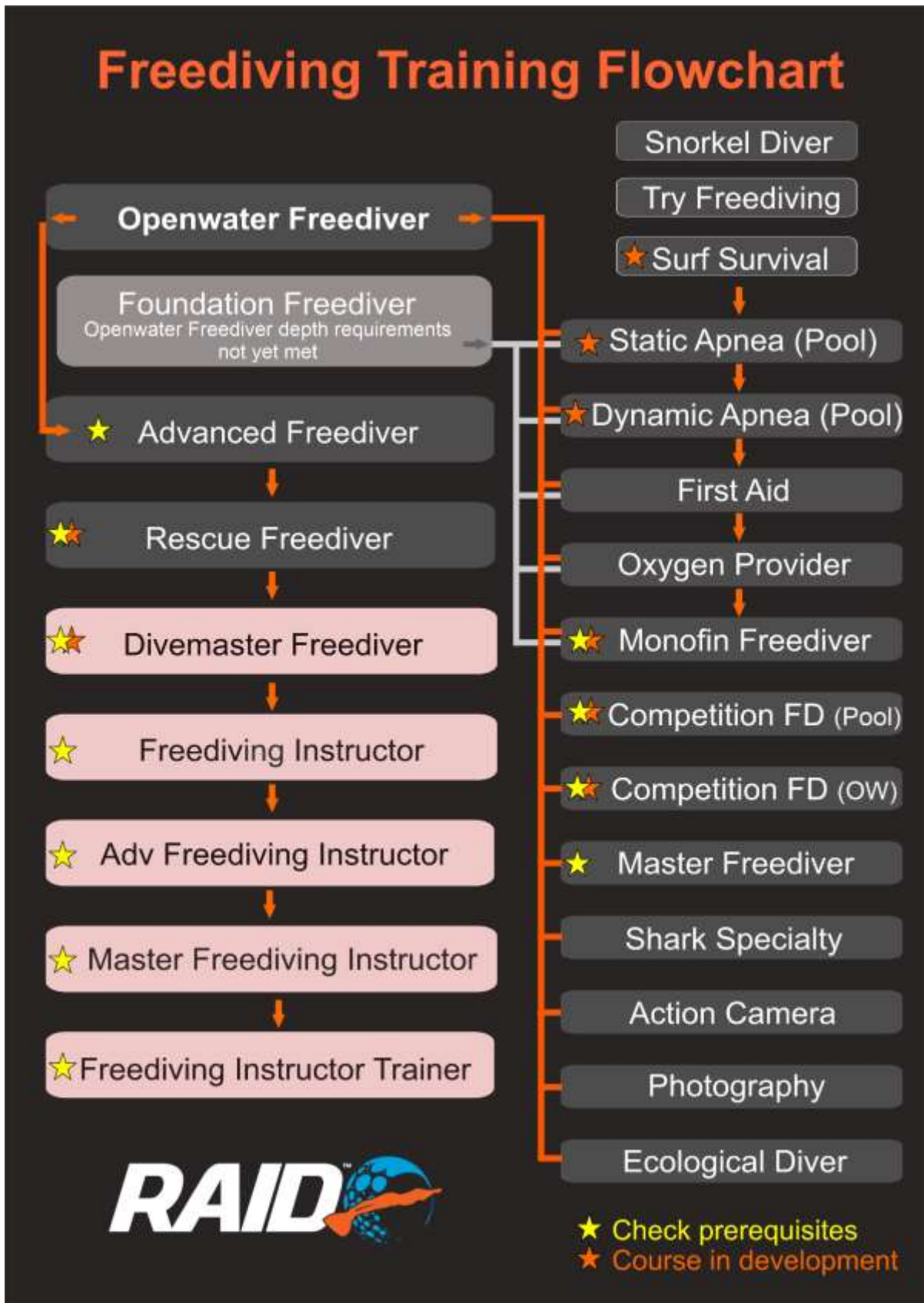
If you are not using a float, or surface too far from it, be sure your airway is clear of the water, and that you're not about to be hit by a wave.

1. If possible, make sure you are holding onto something secure with your airway out of the water.
2. Perform correct recovery breaths.
3. Make the "OK" sign.
4. Say "I'm OK".
5. Take a few relaxed, normal, breaths before speaking, letting go of the float, or resuming normal surface activity.

Building on the knowledge you've gained in the Recreational Freediver Course, the RAID Advanced course is the next step; providing the insight and expertise to bring dives of 30 meters/100 feet comfortably within your grasp.



FREEDIVING TRAINING FLOWCHART



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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