

Bernie Chowdhury's
Technical Diving / Technical Dive Training
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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What is technical diving?

Technical diving includes going deeper than the traditional U.S. recreational diving limit of 130 feet [40 meters], going into overhead environments – caverns, caves, wrecks, and under ice – conducting decompression dives, and breathing gases other than air, for example, nitrox, pure oxygen, trimix, and heliox. It may also include using more sophisticated diving equipment such as full face masks (FFM), underwater communications, sidemount tank configuration, rebreathers, specialized decompression programs, and carrying multiple scuba tanks during dives. Special training and experience are required in order to safely conduct technical diving.

Why should I consider technical dive training?

You can benefit from technical dive training even if you imagine that you'll never dive deeper than 130 feet [40 meters], conduct decompression dives, enter overhead environments, or use more sophisticated equipment. Technical dive training will get your equipment streamlined so that you're far less likely to get tangled underwater or damage the environment, and you'll be able to access your gear more efficiently. You'll configure your gear so that you have back-ups of important things like breathing gas, regulators and lights. You'll also learn how to move through the water using less energy. Dive planning is taken to entirely new levels from what you have learned as a recreational diver. Technical dive training will give you an entirely new respect for the underwater world, as well as new tools – including far better diving skills -- that open greater diving possibilities.

What are the prerequisites for technical diving training?

For **Introduction to Technical Diving** - must be at least 15 years old (and have parental consent), must be an Advanced Open Water diver or equivalent, must have logged at least 25 open water dives.

For **Advanced Nitrox** – you must be at least **Basic Nitrox** certification, be at least 15 years old, and have logged 25 open water dives.

For all TDI technical diving courses beyond those – in general, you must be a certified scuba diver, be at least 18 years old, have at least 25 logged open water dives; some courses require you to have had previous technical diving courses, e.g. **Advanced Nitrox** requires that you are certified first as a **Basic Nitrox** diver, **Advanced Trimix** requires you to be certified first as a **Basic Trimix** diver, etc. See the individual TDI course PDFs for specifics, which are listed in the **What technical diving courses do you offer?** section.

Do I have to dive deep to be a technical diver?

No. Many divers want to spend more time underwater and do it safer than recreational diving will allow, even in relatively shallow depths. One of the things you'll learn about in technical dive training is how to significantly increase your no-decompression dive

time when in recreational diving depths. You do this by using breathing gases that are far more efficient than the compressed air used by recreational divers.

Is technical diving safer than recreational diving?

Technical diving has more risks than recreational diving by definition because of the challenging environments that one dives, such as in caves and inside wrecks, and because of decompression obligations, although various tools, techniques and knowledge have been developed to increase safety. Technical diving requires more training, equipment, skills, discipline and dedication than recreational diving. For those who wish to go deeper, dive longer, penetrate overhead environments, or use more sophisticated equipment, technical diving is a challenge that brings different rewards than recreational diving.

What equipment do I need for technical diving?

It depends on the course. You can use your current recreational gear and build on that as you progress with your technical diving training. You do not need to go out and buy at one time all of the gear used by an advanced technical diver. I will go over the gear and the requirements even before you commit to the course. Classroom lectures also emphasize the required gear, and exactly why you need that equipment, and how it is worn. It is suggested that you do not buy your technical diving equipment before consulting with me.

What technical diving courses do you offer?

I offer technical dive training from TDI (Technical Diving International). Your certification will be recognized worldwide. My course offerings include:

Introduction to Technical Diving

Basic Nitrox

Advanced Nitrox

Decompression Procedures

Advanced Wreck Diver

Basic Trimix

Advanced Trimix

Cavern Diver (Co-taught by Bernie Chowdhury and another instructor)

Introduction to Cave Diving (Co-taught by Bernie Chowdhury and another instructor)

Cave Diver (Full Cave) (Co-taught by Bernie Chowdhury and another instructor)

I can also arrange for other courses, if you wish. **Contact me.**

What is involved with technical dive training?

A combination of classroom and water work is required. You'll get a textbook and have various assignments to test your new knowledge. I also include far more in-depth knowledge than that provided in the textbooks. This is done via additional reading assignments (I'll send you the articles) and in-depth PowerPoint presentations and videos that I've developed. I'll give you valuable feedback and answer your questions. Some of the in-water work is done in controlled water environments such as a quarry or spring. This allows us to concentrate on important safety drills and not be overwhelmed by potentially bad conditions. You'll then take your new knowledge and skills on real dives that you plan with my assistance. These dives can be conducted in warm or cold water, in scenic spots, or on shipwrecks. Cavern and cave diving training are conducted in those environments, of course. See **Where is the classroom and water work done?**, below, for more information on this.

How many training dives do I have to do to be certified as a tech diver?

There are different requirements for different courses. For example, the **Introduction to Technical Diving** course requires a minimum three (3) dives, with no dive exceeding a depth of 75 feet. The **Advanced Nitrox** course requires a minimum of four (4) dives. If **Advanced Nitrox** is combined with **Decompression Procedures**, then a minimum of six (6) dives are conducted; in this case, upon successful completion of all course requirements, certification cards are issued for both **Advanced Nitrox** and **Decompression Procedures**.

For specific requirements for each course, please click on the individual course PDFs, which are listed in the **What technical diving courses do you offer?** section, above.

Where is the classroom and water work done?

Where ever is easiest for you. Classroom and water work can be done where ever you would like. I'm very flexible. There are various dive shops with which I work, so we can do classroom at one of those facilities. I can also conduct classroom training at your house, business, or other location convenient to you. Water skills are conducted in a quarry or spring system and also in the ocean, or other large body of water, e.g. St. Lawrence Seaway, Great Lakes, Gulf of Mexico, etc. You can do the water work in cold

or warm water location. Check my **up-coming trips** to see what's already on the schedule. If a current trip is not convenient for you, I can schedule something to meet your needs. If you'd like to experience a particular dive site or sites, I can make arrangements to go and do our dives there, provided that you have the diving skills to make those dives. (The determination of that will be solely at my discretion.)

How many students are in a class?

The classroom portion is limited only to the number of students who can be comfortably accommodated at a given facility. Typically, there are between two and ten students in a classroom setting.

In-water training is usually limited to four (4) students, and perhaps less, depending on conditions and the actual dive site. Safety is the main concern.

Can I find out about the technical diving instructor and meet him before I make a decision to sign up for a class?

Yes. **Click here for Bernie Chowdhury's diving bio.** Bernie Chowdhury is a frequently featured speaker at major and regional dive shows, dive clubs and dive shops where he's very accessible. You can also **contact me** to make arrangements to meet at a show, dive club, or dive site.

I don't know if technical diving is right for me. Can I learn a little more before making a huge time and money commitment?

Yes. You now have two options: you can take the **Introduction to Technical Diving** course that allows you to use your recreational diving configuration and get the basic introduction to technical diving techniques and planning with three (3) no-decompression dives in the 75 feet and shallower range (this comes with a certification card upon successful completion); the second option is that you can sign up and pay for just the introductory lectures for **Advanced Nitrox** and **Decompression Procedures** to start off. The time and money you've invested in that can be credited to your technical diving training when you're ready to proceed. Even if you've already taken technical dive training elsewhere, you'll benefit from the introductory lectures: I incorporate 20+ years of technical dive experience with diving computer development experience and hyperbaric medicine training to provide unique insights and knowledge. All divers – from novice to experienced, recreational to technical -- will benefit from these lectures.

Is there a way that technical dive training can be done so that I don't have to spend a lot of money right away to get both the training and get a lot more equipment at the same time?

Yes. You can pay a modest price for introductory lectures and have the benefit of that right away. You can then arrange a payment schedule that allows you to continue with

the classroom training. The balance of payment for instruction is due before you get to the open water training portion. You will most likely be able to use at least some of the equipment you currently own for the in-water training. It's possible to just add a few pieces of equipment to your current set-up so that you achieve a greater margin of safety and get the benefits of technical dive training.

I also have a rental purchase program whereby you can rent equipment for your dives. When you're ready to purchase gear, your rental payments will be credited toward the purchase. This also allows you to try different types of gear before making a final decision, which is critical to your having a better, safer time underwater!

Can I speak to some of your past students to see what they thought of your training?

Of course! In fact, I welcome that. Why? If you're having any doubt whether I'd be an appropriate instructor for you I'm sure that will be answered when you speak to any of my former (or even current) students. The only thing I ask is that you be respectful of their time and contact them in a time and manner that is convenient for them, e.g. some students may prefer e-mail contact, others might not have a problem if you call them on a designated day at a given time, etc. For referrals to my students, please **contact me**.

What is your class schedule and when can I schedule a class?

For my speaking and training schedule, please see:

http://calendar.yahoo.com/bernie_chowdhury

Please **contact me** to schedule a class.