



Technical Diving the '7 C's'

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Technical Diving the Seven C's

Advanced, technical, and exploration caliber diving has certainly proven itself over the last 2 decades. This market alone is growing every year, as we see new products, new travel opportunities, and new record-breaking explorations being accomplished around the world. In these respects, these are exciting times in the diving industry and exploration community. One misfortune, however, is the 'rush' mentality to become a technical diver without having the full understanding of what technical diving truly is.

So what is technical diving?

Technical diving is not about diving deeper, longer, harder, or in some alien environment. It is about the capability to do these things safely and with confidence. This mode of diving is not intended to train folks to specifically dive the Doria, dive to 600feet(200meters), in caves, or whatever. This type of diving is not for everyone.

Technical diving is, however, an opportunity to encourage highly skilled divers relearn several fundamental skills, and be challenged to extend one's physical, psychological, and physiological limits. Such diving and training is designed to make everyone a better diver at all levels by teaching self-discipline, self-awareness, and self-reliance. These are skills that are often overlooked in today's recreational level training, yet are at the heart of what it truly takes to advance one's diving career.

These personal skills lead to a new appreciation for diving at all levels, will make the diver more comfortable in the water, and will open the door to a realm of our oceans that very few adventurers and explorers have access to...technical diving is the ultimate privilege in the industry.

When taken to a completely new level, that being working-class exploration, it is even more critical for the fundamentals to be second nature. Task loading increases, both physically and psychologically, as specific objectives other than going for a leisurely swim, must be achieved.

The 7 C's

So what are the 'need to knows'? They surely cannot all be covered in this brief article, however the following highlight some fundamentals concept for consideration, and offer hints for technical diving, which can certainly be applied to all levels of diving, and other modes of exploration...

Comfort

Being comfortable in the water is an absolute must for any diver or diver-to-be. Diving is an equipment intensive activity, but you can't rely on gear to get you out of trouble. Be comfortable in and aware of your surroundings. The more time you spend in and on the water, the more comfortable you will be, the safer you will be, and your underwater experience will be that much more enjoyable!

Confidence



Figure 1: Diver Caleb Thibeault making a gas switch. Photo (c) M. Lombardi 2004.

If you aren't confident in your ability to make the dive, don't make it! Even though we may dive in pairs or as teams, you are ultimately and solely responsible for your actions. Be confident in your training and skill level, and be confident you can survive if your support crew doesn't get their job done. There is a clear distinction between confidence and arrogance. Arrogance will get you in trouble or even killed, confidence is a survival skill.

Common-sense

Well duh! Diving itself isn't rocket science. Common sense will take you a long way. Use it in every aspect of the dive, from pre-planning right through to the boat ride home.

Commitment

You have to commit at several levels to be a diver. You must commit to the expense of equipment and training. During the dive, you are more than likely at a depth or in an environment where you are committed to problem solving underwater, in the dark, and likely a long way from home. You must also commit to a career long effort to maintain your skills and practice, practice, practice! When you are not actively diving, train for it!

Contingencies

What if... Make sure you can cover them all. Out of gas? Went too deep, stayed too long, lost a deco bottle, lost the boat, swept off site, etc.

Continuing education

You are always a student. One thing that separates the professionals from the rest is that even the seasoned veterans are constantly training. Whether it be taking a formal course, attending a seminar, or simply evaluating and re-evaluating one's personal skills. If you think you know it all, you know nothing.

be Critical

Take nothing for granted. Be critical of your environment, your equipment, and your personal abilities. Constantly evaluate and re-evaluate your diving techniques. You must be self-confident, self-disciplined, and self-sufficient. Be critical of your techniques, dive plan, and execution of the plan. Complacency kills!!!

References

Earlier versions of this article have been published in the following:

Lombardi, MR. (2007) Technical Diving the 7 C's. The Summit Journal. Released August 28, 2007.

Lombardi, MR. (2005) Technical Diving the 7C's. Dive Chronicles Magazine May/June '05 Issue. pp 69-71.