

## MUSAC Diving FAQ's:

So you're thinking about joining MUSAC – brilliant!! We hope to see you soon. In the meantime, below is a list of questions we regularly get asked by new members and those considering taking up diving as a hobby. It's by no means exhaustive, and if you've any questions please *CONTACT US* and <http://www.musac.co.uk/Contacts.html> we'll do our best to answer your questions.

### 1. Can anyone dive?

In general, yes. There are some medical exclusions, and you will have to complete a dive medical in order to dive. You must be able to swim, but you don't have to be a strong swimmer. There's no upper age limit, although as a club, MUSAC do not currently accept junior members.

### 2. What equipment do I need?

Basic diving kit for diving in the UK consists of a drysuit, hood and gloves, an inflatable jacket known as a BCD, mask and snorkel, a SCUBA tank for compressed air, regulators (first and second stages, and an octopus - spare second stage), pressure & depth gauges, dive computer, a weight belt and weights, boots, fins, an underwater torch and a dive knife. It's also worth compiling a small kit of tools and spares, such as Allen keys, screwdriver, o-rings, spare mask and fin straps, silicone grease etc., as nothing spoils a dive like a broken finstrap or a lost o-ring!

Of course, once you've got all this, you will soon find loads of other things that are absolutely essential!

### 3. Do I need to buy it all upfront?

No. MUSAC offers the use of club equipment free of charge throughout your training, allowing you to build up your own kit gradually. It is encouraged for members to have their own kit by the time they qualify as a Sport Diver.

### 4. How much does diving cost?

Like many hobbies, diving involves an initial outlay for specialist equipment, which then must be serviced and maintained to ensure its safety. In addition, there are club and ScotSAC fees to be paid annually. A day's shore diving may cost no more than transport costs and air fills. Boat diving or organised expeditions will be more expensive. A breakdown of approximate costs is given below:

MUSAC Fees:	£85 per annum + £25 one of joining Fee
ScotSAC Fees:	£55 per annum
Equipment:	
Drysuit:	£500 - £1000
Undersuit:	£200
BCD:	£250-£400
Tank:	~£150

Regulator (inc. Octopus)	£250 – LOTS!
Gauges:	~£50 each
Dive Computer:	£200 - £900
Fins:	£50-£150
Boots:	~£40
Hood & Gloves:	~£40
Mask & Snorkel:	~£60
Torch:	£50 - £500
Knife:	£30 - £100
Weight Belt:	~£20 for belt, plus ~£8 per kilo for lead
Servicing:	
Regs:	~£50 per annum
Tanks:	~£50 every 2.5 years.

#### 5. Should I buy second-hand dive equipment?

Yes, absolutely! It can result in a significant cost reduction on buying brand new. MUSAC generally have various second hand items for sale, and it's always worth asking around before committing to buying something new. However, be cautious. Ask when equipment was last used and serviced, and if possible test the equipment and check it is working properly – eg BCDs inflate and hold air, regulators show no obvious sign of leakage from the first stage, and you can only breathe one way through the second stage .... If in doubt, remember it is your safety you are bargaining with, and don't buy unless you are sure the equipment is reliable.

#### 6. How do I look after my equipment?

Salt is the main enemy of most diving equipment and it's very important that ALL equipment is thoroughly rinsed in fresh water after each diving trip (Note – that includes your tanks!). Drysuits and BCDs should be checked for any damage and dried completely before putting away. Remember to empty out any water which may have got into the BCD.

Regulators are delicate instruments and care must be taken when using and cleaning these. Sand or dried salt inside the second stage of a regulator may cause it to free-flow when in use, and can eventually cause damage to the membranes and valves inside the device. Most manufacturers will provide care instructions and these should always be followed. If none are available, then general care instructions would be to submerge the regs in fresh water and give them a good shoogles around to loosen and remove any deposits. NEVER depress the purge button and make sure the dust cap is securely affixed to the first stage so no water can enter it. Ideally, regs should be rinsed when still attached to a tank and under pressure – that way no water gets where it's not supposed to be.

Neoprene parts (suit, hood, gloves etc) can be washed in warmish water, and a wash with a mild shampoo such as baby shampoo once in a while will keep them smelling

sweet. Keep drysuit zips lubricated with beeswax or specialist lube such as Zip Slip, and dive knives need regular greasing too to prevent rusting.

For more information, the following links offer some advice on good ways to care for your kit.

<http://ukdivers.com/articles/taking-care-of-your-dive-kit>

<http://www.ukdivers.net/equipment/equipcare.htm>

<http://www.sandiegodiving.com/education/items/7.html>

7. How long will it take me to get qualified?

That depends on how much you are able to train. As a rough guide, expect to take around a year to gain your Sport Diver qualification. See our Training page for more information. <http://www.musac.co.uk/Training.html>

8. What's involved in a typical day's diving?

An average dive may only last around 30-45 minutes, but you should expect to commit more time than this once other aspects are considered. A typical day will usually involve meeting at some prearranged point to travel to the dive site, travel to the site (sometimes as much as a 3hr drive from Musselburgh), risk assessment and preparation, diving, surface interval, second dive, packing up and ensuring the dive site is left as we found it, and travel back. A typical day comprising two dives at one of the West Coast loch sites may take 10-12 hours in total. East Coast sites are closer, and a day diving there may take around 6-8 hours. Factor in time to clean and maintain dive kit and you're looking at a reasonable time commitment if you want to dive regularly.

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Still want more information?

Check out the Scottish Sub Aqua Club Website: <http://www.scotsac.com>