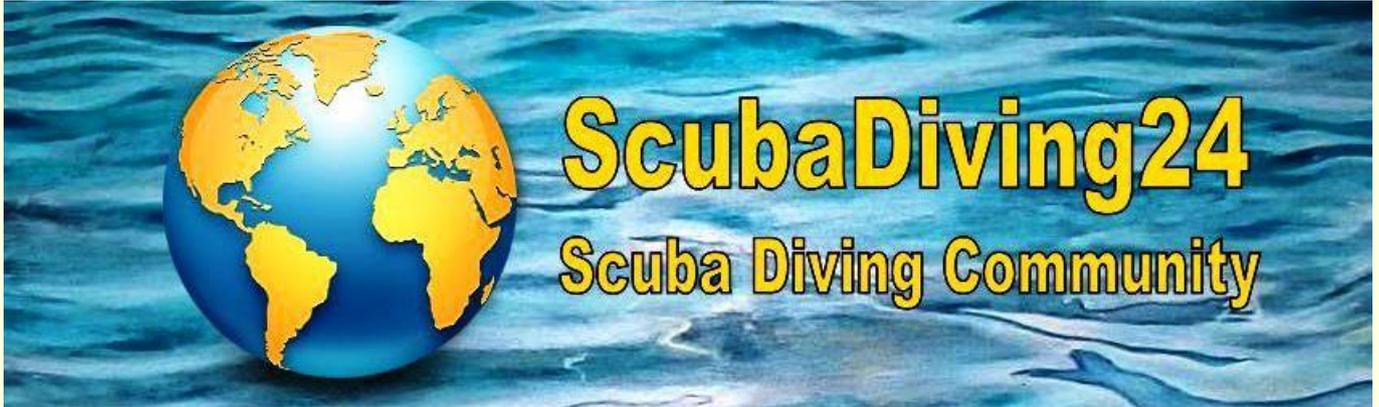


10 Tips for Drift Diving



Not all current is dangerous – in fact, at some dive sites and in some corners of the world it's the norm. Here's how to relax and enjoy the ride:

1. Streamline your gear. Don't damage the reef with your dangling octo or gauge.
2. Be properly weighted and neutrally buoyant. Flying along the reef like a sports car is fun, but if you're carrying unnecessary extra weight, you're going to feel like an out-of-control Mack truck.
3. Use the reef to your advantage. Need to let a buddy catch up, take a photo or just stop for a moment? Look for a big coral mound or reef structure and position yourself in the current's lee. If you need to hang on to something, look for a rock to grab or stick your finger into the sand. In milder current, you should be able to turn and face it while kicking slowly and steadily to maintain your position.
4. Make sure you carry multiple surface signaling devices. With a planned drift dive, the boat will follow along rather than staying stationary – so when you surface, you'll need to be able to signal to the boat so it can pick you up.
5. If current has forced you to surface away from the boat – due to being swept away from the exit point, exhaustion or a low-on-air situation – make yourself visible at the surface so the dive-boat crew can spot you.
6. Inflate your surface marker buoy. If you have a delayed surface marker buoy, deploy it while you're underwater, especially if you're still being carried away by the current or there's boat traffic.
7. Establish buoyancy and stay afloat. Inflate your BC, and if needed, drop your weights.
8. To increase your chances of being seen easily at sea, carry an array of surface signaling devices – both visual and audible – such as an air horn, whistle, signaling mirror, and flashing strobe or dive light.
9. Once you have the boat crew's attention, signal that you're OK. Keep your mask on and regulator in place.
10. If you're with your buddy or group, stay together. The boat crew can spot you more easily, and it can help you remain calm.