

# IN or OUT - Less is More with InFlor™

comfortable with the equipment, learn the basic skills of diving, and how to breathe underwater, all in the friendly environment of a shallow pool. Then, and only then, will the lesson proceed to more advanced training. "Once we're sure the diver is comfortable with everything," explains Gatacre, "we subject him or her to some more stressful things because they are going to come across these types of situations in the open water." One example is mask clearing. During a dive, a mask will commonly fill with water and must be emptied to prevent breathing water in through the nose, disorientation, and to ensure good vision. This is practiced in shallow water first to avoid a panic situation in deeper water. Divers must also be prepared for other situations such as the mask falling off, which occasionally happens. A diver must be able to retrieve it or have it retrieved, put it back on or have it put back on, and clear it with no problem.

New divers, with their buddies (or partners—trained divers who act as diver aides; all divers should always dive with at least one buddy) and instructors alongside them then proceed to open water. There they undergo a rigorous set of equipment and mental readiness checks in order to satisfy the instructor that the diver is, indeed, ready to descend. "I reassure people that they are not going to be trapped underwater," says Gatacre. "When they want to call a dive off, if they are uncomfortable, I want them to have the confidence to do that. Diving is not about being a hero."

There are three categories of certification a diver with disabilities can achieve through HSA.

- Level A—Certified to help another diver in distress; can be a dive buddy to anyone; has the necessary rescue skills. (Can also achieve PADI certification.)
- Level B—Competent diver, but not certified to help someone in an emergency.
- Level C—Needs assistance with controlling buoyancy, propulsion through the water, and monitoring equipment.

According to Gatacre, despite these classifications, none of the above divers' parameters are restricted in any way. That

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