

# Divers, Stay Positive Through the Pandemic

With many countries around the world currently under some form of lockdown, or travel restrictions, most people have had to put both their livelihoods and hobbies on the backburner. Depending on where you live, diving may be restricted or permitted under special circumstances or even outright forbidden for the time being. We spoke with Matt Jevon, an experienced dive instructor for the company Divesoft on his suggestions for remaining positive about the future of diving during these unsure times. Matt is also a psychologist and has recently recovered from coronavirus, two aspects which surely qualified him to speak on this topic.

## Contracting Coronavirus

Everything was business as usual for Matt until he became infected with COVID-19 in mid-March 2020. He has since safely recovered but has spoken frequently about the effects the virus has had on both his breathing and lungs. While he was ill, Jevon had to spend all of time resting at home under quarantine restrictions. We asked for his thoughts specifically on how people who are accustomed to travelling and discovering new experiences underwater can remain positive and still lead a healthy life when forced to stay at home.

“The first thing to remember and accept is that the sense of frustration and even anger you might be feeling is normal. The situation is unprecedented, and it wouldn’t be reasonable to expect a calm acceptance from everyone. Once you accept that these are okay feelings to have, instead of being caught up in the emotions, you can start to plan how you will cope,” explains Matt.



*Photo Courtesy of Matt Jevon*

## How to also Be a Diver Outside the Water

Some of Matt's everyday suggestions for divers include reconfiguring your dive kit to be more functional, streamlined, and dive-friendly as well as gaining inspiration by researching different diving types and taking action to organise training in those new disciplines. From a psychological standpoint, Matt also suggests keeping your mental skills up-to-date. "Go back and debrief your last 10 dives. Keep in touch with your team and buddies and reminisce on some of your great memories together. Take time to look for and make improvements individually or as a collective." Matt also runs a Facebook page called [@PSTforDIVING](#) which you can visit to gain valuable information on "psychological skills for diving" as well as connect with other people who find themselves in the same boat as you.

Another focus should be preparing for the future. When asked how to do this, Matt responded, "You can take this time to invest in new kit and get used to its operation out of the water, maybe even read the manual!" Matt goes on to suggest "provisionally booking and paying the deposit on a skills review session with your instructor" (assuming you have the financial means to do so), something that could help bring you back up to your highest qualification. Matt is also quick to remind divers that working together with your instructor, especially right after this pandemic, could be mutually beneficial; you get to brush up on your skills and conversely, you'd "be helping an instructor who probably hasn't had any money coming in."

## Staying Positive No Matter the Situation

This isn't an easy time for anyone, but there's always something we can do to make each day better for ourselves as well as for those around us. Another suggestion from Matt, something we could all easily do with a little down time at home, is reading back over our logbooks. "Pick out some highlights from your dives and make plans to return when things are back to normal. Start saving for a bucket list trip in 2021 or 2022." It's that kind of planning for the future and having something to look forward to that has helped him stay positive when fighting coronavirus.

In closing, Matt reminds us to vary our options. He suggests activities such as getting fitter or taking courses online, whether diving-related or not. Just getting out of bed and [stimulating the body and mind](#) will work wonders for both your physical and mental health. It's safe to say all of us have gained a new perspective in light of the current situation, and Matt encourages us to remain positive, saying, "Diving is not all of life. Smell the roses, improve the house. Give love, time, and attention to those nearest and dearest to you. But most importantly, remember to have fun!"



*Photo Courtesy of Matt Jevon*

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## **About Matt Jevon**

Matt is currently a CCR Liberty sidemount instructor and has been working with Divesoft in Ireland through his business South West Technical Diving since 2019. His experience in diving however, dates back much further than that, having found his passion for the sport over 30 years ago. During this time, Matt has travelled the world diving caves, wrecks, and reefs and has taken part in well-known dive documentaries with the likes of Philip Gray (extreme underwater artist) and participated in several (including the very first) dive projects with the famous Dirty Dozen Expeditions. Apart from diving, Matt became interested in psychology, specifically on high performance in sports and more recently in the psychology of divers. It was this drive to learn more on the subject that drove him to return to university in the 90s to achieve a Masters in Sports Psychology.

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## **Additional Resources**

- [COVID-19 and Diving Activities: 10 Safety Recommendations by DAN Europe](#)
- [A New Health Declaration Form Sample Addressing C-19 Issues](#)