

AIDA 2 Freediver

What you're getting into.
A complete guide for prospective students

The world's most widely recognized entry-level freediving certification, taught over **2.5 to 3 days** at La Jolla Shores. You'll hold your breath for two minutes, swim 40 meters underwater on one breath, descend to 12 meters on a vertical line, and know how to rescue a buddy from depth. The card you walk away with is honored by every freediving school in the world.

WHAT THIS IS

The foundation certification for recreational freediving.

AIDA International is the oldest international standards body for freediving — founded in 1992, governs the world championships, and sets the credentialing standards every serious freediving school uses or maps to.

AIDA 2 is the level at which you become a competent, autonomous freediver: comfortable with breath-hold physiology, capable of recognizing and responding to safety issues in your buddy, and trained to descend on a vertical line under your own control. Most students at LJFC are first-time freedivers — no prior certification required.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

What you'll need to do.

STATIC	DYNAMIC	DEPTH	EXAM
2:00 Breath hold in confined water, with buddy	40m Underwater swim with bi-fins	12m Constant Weight on the line	75% Written theoretical exam

These numbers look bigger on paper than they feel in practice. Most students hit the confined-water requirements — the 2-minute static and 40m dynamic — on their first or second try during the course. Depth is more variable, but with proper Frenzel technique and relaxation, 12 meters is well within reach for almost any healthy adult. **It looks daunting from outside the water. Inside, it's doable.**

COURSE STRUCTURE

2.5 to 3 days, structured.

DAY 1 · EVENING

Classroom theory

~3 hours covering physiology, equalization, safety, equipment, and the freediving disciplines. In person or Zoom.

DAY 2 · FULL DAY

Confined water + ocean

Morning static and dynamic apnea with rescue scenarios — at calm shallow water at the Shores when conditions allow, in a pool otherwise. Afternoon open-water session — first depth dives at 5–8m on the LJFC line.

DAY 3 · CERT

Cert dives + exam

Morning 12m cert dives in peak-tide calm conditions. Written exam on the beach. Cards processed in AIDA EOS within 24h.

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

Ten subject areas across theory, confined water, and open water.

Theory · the why

- Basic physiology of freediving (respiratory + circulatory systems, breath regulation)
- The freedive breathing cycle (relaxation, full breath, recovery)
- Equalization — Frenzel introduction
- Safety, LMC, blackout, buddy systems, rescue protocols
- Freediving equipment
- Freediving disciplines (STA, DYN, FIM, CWT, VWT, NLT)
- AIDA Green — environmental responsibility (new in 2025 curriculum)

Confined water · the mechanics *pool, or calm shallow water at the Shores*

- 2-minute static apnea with a buddy
- 40m dynamic with bi-fins
- Surface LMC recovery + blackout response with weight removal

Open water · the application

- Equipment setup, weighting check, surface protocols
- Equalization on the line, head-down descent technique
- Duck dives, vertical bi-finning, controlled turns at depth
- Buddy supervision from the surface, rescue from depth
- The 12-meter Constant Weight Bi-fins certification dive

PRICING

Two ways to take it.

GROUP · 2+ STUDENTS

\$575
per person

Group rate kicks in at 2. If you book solo and another student locks in your dates, you both pay group.

PRIVATE · SOLO

\$800
one-on-one

Same curriculum, taught one-on-one with flexible scheduling around your week.

Includes: AIDA certification card, full course, digital manual, instructor time, LJFC mooring line access. Not included: personal gear (rentals available), AIDA membership (first year free with certification), optional extra ocean training days (\$150/day if needed).

HOW THE CERT ACTUALLY WORKS

Skills are recorded individually. You can always come back.

AIDA 2 isn't a pass-or-fail exam — it's four separate performance standards (static, dynamic, depth, written) that are evaluated independently. Your logbook records exactly which skills you've met. If you complete three of the four during your course, that progress stays with you.

The AIDA standard gives you up to **12 months** from your last signed skill to complete the remaining requirements — with us or with any AIDA instructor worldwide. No redoing what you've already passed.

Source: AIDA Instructor Standards v4.4 (Jan 2023), §8.5 Referral Procedures.

Three certification variants per AIDA Instructor Standards ch.7:

- **AIDA 2 Freediver** — full cert, both confined-water and depth requirements met
- **AIDA 2 Pool Freediver** — confined-water requirements met, depth not yet completed
- **AIDA 2 Depth Freediver** — depth requirement met, confined-water portion not yet complete

Whichever partial cert you receive, you complete the remaining portion within 12 months and upgrade to the full AIDA 2 card (€10 upgrade fee at the AIDA level). The certs are named "Pool" and "Depth" in the AIDA system — confined water can happen at the Shores when conditions allow.

MEDICAL SCREENING

How we screen for medical safety.

Freediving puts real demands on your cardiovascular, respiratory, and ear/sinus systems. The standard tool is the **AIDA Medical Statement** — 11 questions you answer honestly before any in-water training. We send it in your booking confirmation; you complete it before course day.

What we ask about

1. Regular medications
2. Mental and mood conditions
3. Neurological — seizures, blackouts
4. Cardiovascular — heart, BP, pacemaker
5. Pulmonary — asthma, lung function
6. ENT — sinuses, eardrums, hearing
7. Eye conditions, eye surgery
8. Diabetes
9. Prior diving accidents
10. Judgment under stress
11. Pregnancy

A YES to any question triggers a physician review — not an automatic disqualification. Your doctor signs the form stating they find no medical conditions incompatible with freediving. Most students with mild, controlled, or seasonal conditions get cleared without difficulty.

USUALLY WORKABLE

- Seasonal allergies (pre-treat)
- Mild, controlled asthma (with physician sign-off)
- Sinus issues — time the dive day
- Past ear infections, fully resolved
- Most routine prescriptions
- Mild, controlled hypertension
- Corrected vision (LASIK with clearance)

GENERALLY INCOMPATIBLE

- Severe, uncontrolled asthma or COPD
- Recent heart attack, BP > 160/90
- Active seizure disorder
- History of significant blackout or dive accident
- Pregnancy
- Recent ear/sinus surgery without specialist clearance
- Type 1 diabetes without stable control
- Perforated eardrum, untreated

If you're unsure, reach out before you book. A short conversation upfront saves the surprise of finding out the day before the course. DAN maintains a referral network of dive-aware physicians — dan.org/find-a-doctor.

HOW TO PREPARE

Four weeks of low-volume prep makes everything easier.

The single biggest predictor of how well you do on AIDA 2 isn't fitness. It's arriving rested and comfortable with Frenzel equalization. Those two things compound. The full 4-week plan is at lajollafreediveclub.com/blog/how-to-prepare-for-aida-2-san-diego-4-week-plan.

- **Week 1:** Get comfortable with the 200m swim
- **Week 2:** Learn Frenzel equalization on land and practice diaphragmatic breathing
- **Week 3:** Build a 90-second to 2-minute static breath hold lying down (never near water alone)
- **Week 4:** Taper, rest, and arrive fresh

YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Joshua Beneventi

AIDA Instructor · AIDA Youth Instructor · AIDA 4 Master Freediver. San Diego's only AIDA-certified instructor for both adults and youth. DAN Professionally Insured. Current Red Cross Adult & Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED.

Training lineage: Stella Abbas (Freedive Tioman, Malaysia) → Pieter Van Veen (Dahab, Egypt) → Harry Chamas (Freedive Passion, La Ventana, Mexico) → Khaled El Gammal (Dahab, Egypt) for AIDA 4 and the Instructor + Youth Instructor courses.

SAFETY

How the course is run.

- **Tighter than required ratios** — AIDA mandates 4:1 in open water; we run closer to 2:1
- **No hyperventilation, ever** — the single most dangerous habit in freediving
- **Buddy protocols on every dive** — one up, one down, surface watch
- **DAN-stocked O2 + first aid kit** on site for every water day
- **Written Emergency Action Plan** — AIDA-mandated; nearest hospital (UCSD), nearest hyperbaric facility, lifeguard tower contact, evacuation route
- **Medical screening upfront** — conditions get a conversation, sometimes a physician sign-off

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- AIDA International course standards — aidainternational.org/Education/AIDAFreedivingCourses
- AIDA Instructor Standards v4.4 (January 2023)
- AIDA 2 Manual v2.0 (2025) — provided as PDF to all enrolled students
- AIDA Medical Statement V2.2 (June 2019)
- AIDA EOS certification system — eos.aidainternational.org
- DAN (Divers Alert Network) — dan.org

Joshua Beneventi · joshuabeneventi@gmail.com · lajollafreediveclub.com
AIDA Instructor · DAN Insured · Red Cross First Aid/CPR/AED
To inquire about course dates: lajollafreediveclub.com/contact/courses