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The Physics of Diving

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The underwater world, and in particular our oceans, represent a final frontier of exploration. In the past, studying the underwater fauna and flora used to be a dangerous undertaking reserved to professional divers. Technological advances over the last 50 years have given sports divers the opportunity to explore this fascinating world using self-contained underwater breathing apparatuses (SCUBA). Despite these technological advances humans have to cope with an unusual environment: perception is different underwater and there is always a risk of decompression illness due to the ambient pressure. After a brief overview of SCUBA diving, some physical phenomena particular to diving will be presented.