

Text by Matt Jevon, MSc, F.IoD.

For most of us in lockdown during the coronavirus pandemic, being away from diving in itself is enough to cause withdrawal symptoms. Sometimes, factors such as work, weather and lifestyle can mean that we take longish breaks, although I do not think anyone has taken such a long break before—certainly not one that left no choice and one that required significant lifestyle changes and restrictions. It has caused many of us to re-examine our approach.

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 would not be reasonable to expect calm acceptance. Once you accept that these are OK feelings to have, instead of being caught up in these emotions, you can start to plan how you will cope. If

you are struggling with this, reach out—first to trusted friends and then to a professional, if needed. Online psychological support is very effective—no laying on of hands needed!

Look after your mental and physical health. Do not get caught up in

work, or worse, daytime TV. Get out if you can, exercise, eat well and mostly healthily! Relax and spend time—even if only online—with people you love and respect.

Have a plan for each day. It does not need to be the same routine every day,

unless that suits your psychological make-up (it would drive me mad!); however, the days and weeks will get away from you if you do not bring some focus into your time. I tend to map out the three “must-do’s” for each day and allocate specific times to do these. Then, I plan

a bit of “me” time: relaxation, exercise, guitar practice, etc. I try and limit social media and TV, otherwise, these can become a real time soak.

For divers, build in something dive-specific into your daily routine. A few ideas follow:

# Surviving Lockdown

*Tips for Divers*

ILLUSTRATION COMPILED WITH PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGES





wellness

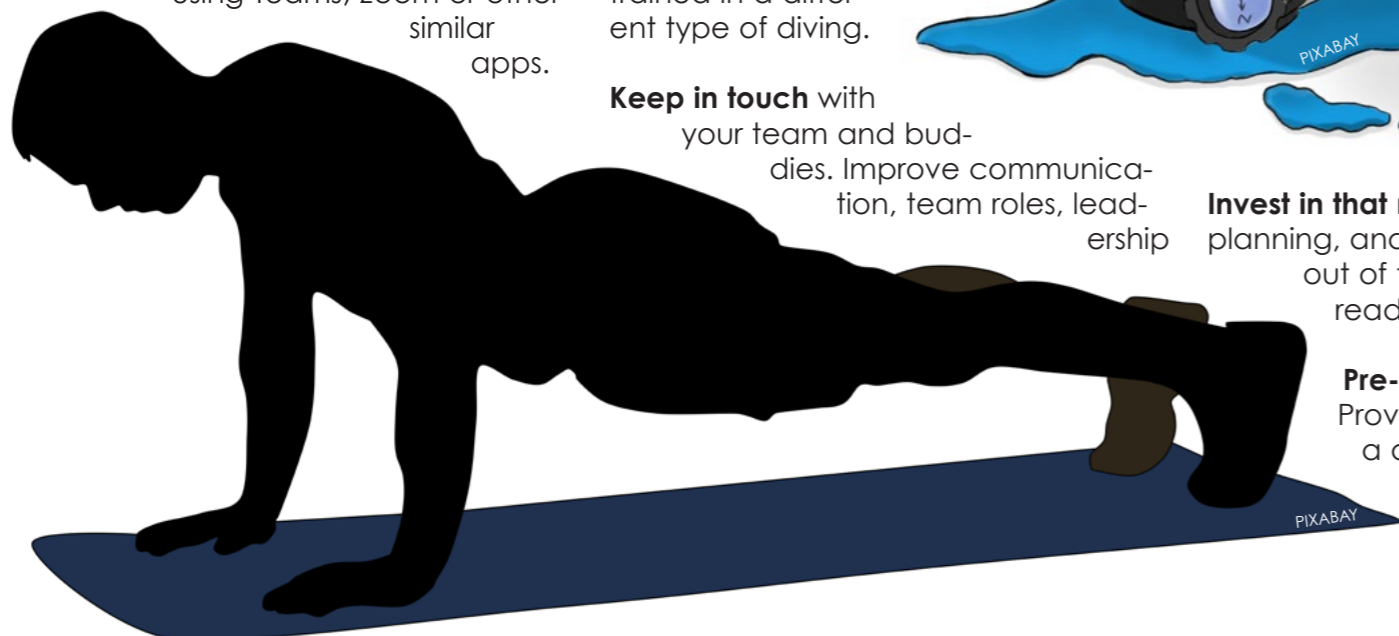
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**Plan A**

Do things that will enhance and improve your diving when you can go back to it. There are a huge number of options from which to choose:

**Get fitter.** This will make a great improvement to your comfort, skill and safety. Pay attention to strength and movement as well as aerobic fitness. Despite what many would have you believe, strength and power are important elements in diving, as they improve muscle structure and function, and blood composition.

**Take some continuing education.** Online courses and webinars are now plentiful. Online learning is available from most dive training agencies. Lots of instructors are offering online instruction, in small groups or one-to-one, using Teams, Zoom or other similar apps.



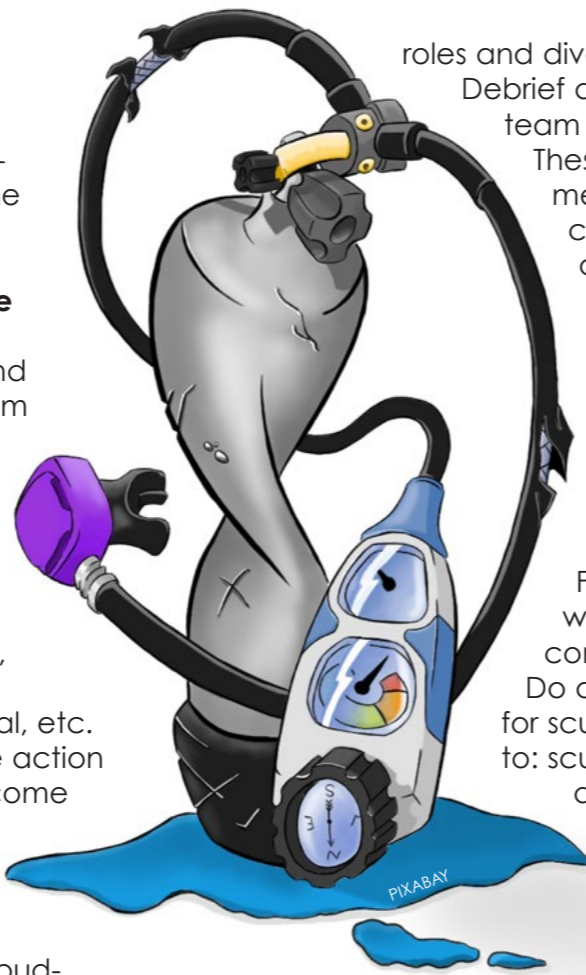
roles and dive protocols. Debrief again with the team your last ten dives. These dives are great memories and a chance to identify and make improvements individually and as a group.

**Service, clean and maintain your dive kit,** maybe using the online help of authorised technicians or the manufacturer.

**Reconfigure your dive kit** to be more functional, streamlined and dive-friendly. Help from instructors online will be useful.

**Be inspired.** Read, watch and research different types of diving: cave, wreck, reef, ecological, ghost net removal, etc. Make plans and take action to experience or become trained in a different type of diving.

**Keep in touch** with your team and buddies. Improve communication, team roles, leadership



**Work on your psychological and mental skills.** Look at @PSTforDIVING on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/PSTforDIVING/>). Do a Google search for scuba-psyche (or go to: [scubapsyche.com](http://scubapsyche.com)) and human factors in diving (or go to: [thehumandiver.com](http://thehumandiver.com)).

**Invest in that new kit** you have been planning, and get used to its operation out of the water—maybe even read the manual!

**Pre-book a skills review.** Provisionally, book and pay a deposit on a skills review session with your instruc-

tor to bring you back up to your highest qualification. You will be helping an instructor, who probably has no money coming in, by paying a deposit and also have something to look forward to, which will be challenging and rewarding for you.

**Plan B**  
**Read back over your logbooks.** See, there is a good reason to keep these. Pick out some highlights in your dives and make plans to return when travel restrictions lift. Enjoy the memories and experiences. Look at the pictures and videos if you took any.

**Start saving** for a bucket-list level trip in 2021 or 2022. You will be more certain of going and very excited if you are planning and working towards the dream. I know many are financially pressured. If so, make it a longer-term savings plan.



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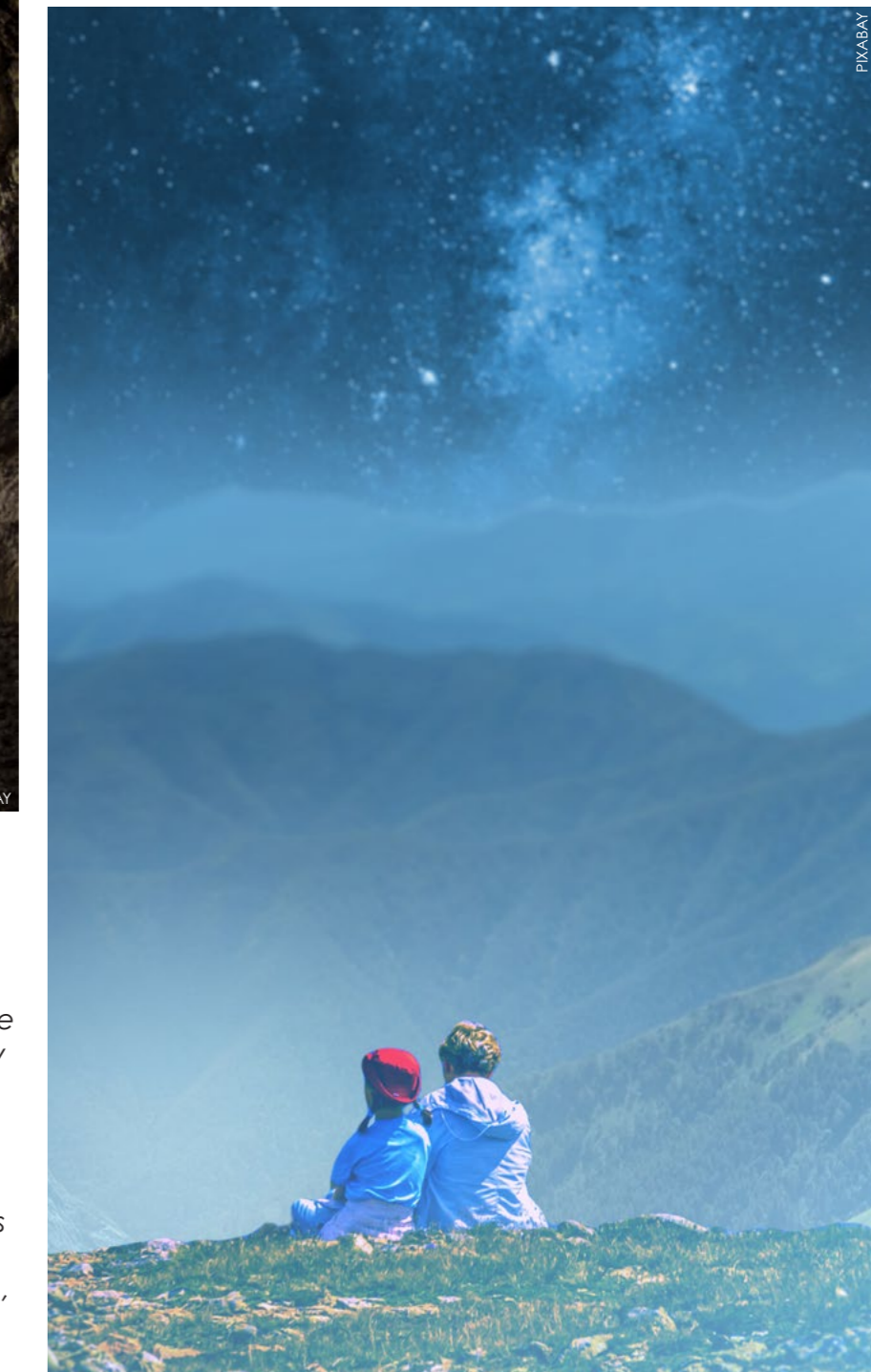
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COVID-19



**Make a plan** to revive a trip you have had to cancel and were looking forward to. You do not need to be certain of dates at this stage, just confident that, yes, it will happen.

**Positive changes**

Many people have used the time that the pandemic restrictions have created to review their lifestyle, work practices and more. They have made positive decisions to make changes for the better, to be doing more things they find rewarding, as well as stopping things that were sucking up time,

energy and resources and not adding to their quality of life. Spend quality time with people who matter to you. Get outside more, exercise more—many of these should be part of your forward look as restrictions ease.

Most importantly, avoid the phrase “back to normal.” Not only will we not be back to whatever normal was very soon, but we may never return to it at all. Not returning to normal should be a good thing for a lot of people—especially, if we take time to get a grip now.

Finally, diving is not all of life. Smell

the roses, improve the house, give love, time and attention to those nearest and dearest to you. *Have fun!*

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*Matt Jevon, M.Sc. F.IoD, is a Full Expedition level Trimix and Cave Instructor on open circuit (OC) and closed circuit rebreather (CCR) with TDI and ANDI. He is the JJ-CCR and Divesoft Liberty Sidemount instructor and dealer for Ireland. In the past, he has done cave exploration in the Philippines, wreck projects in Croatia and Ireland, as well as being one of*

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