

Think like a Fish

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Article **Submerge**: By **Don Shirley**

If you want to dive, you need to think like a fish, I don't mean go round in circles and open and close your mouth (though I have seen divers do it)! I live deep in the water, deep in a cave, away from air, light and the terrestrial world. Often with no noise - not even bubbles. It's my world. I can solve any problem that might occur; just as a land dweller would. A fish would rather be under water than the surface – so would I!

Firstly, you must behave like a fish: you must be happy in your water environment. When under water your mental and physical response must be different - you cannot run back to the surface if you have a problem. You must solve it where it happens, which means you need to be happy in the water. You can achieve this with a good mental attitude and being accustomed to the water. You cannot learn to dive from theory or web surfing alone. Practice makes perfect. If there is something that bothers you, practice it (physically and mentally) until you can solve it in your sleep.

Breathing: Have you ever seen a fish short of breath? Don't breathe "normally". Breathe like a fish. Breathe using the diaphragm with a long slow inhalation, a short pause, and a long slow exhalation. If you can breath underwater, all is fine! If you don't have gas you have an issue. If you have planned your world, there will be spare gas either in a cylinder on your side, a close buddy, or the surface. I don't see fish blowing bubbles, so I prefer not to either. Rebreathing the gas you exhale is efficient and gives you many extra options when things go wrong.

Buoyancy: When a fish stops swimming, it does not sink, lie on the bottom, or bob to the surface. It will also not grab hold of something for support. So you should not do so either. Your buoyancy should be fine-tuned to float neutrally if you stop swimming.

Assent: When you ascend, go slowly and under control. If you're deploying a marker buoy, but don't it pull you up when you deploy it. Don't use it as a crutch – think fish. It is there as a beacon so that the boat will spot you. It also gives you a reference when you are in mid space. Keep the line tight - pulling it in. If decompressing, float with the reel. Don't hang onto it for dear life. You will feel more relaxed.

Movement: Move like a fish - they are streamlined, move graciously, with seemingly no effort. So streamline your gear. Conserve energy in your fin strokes; use it for propulsion - forward, backwards or sideways. But don't use it as a buoyancy aid. Efficiency and duration is the aim. If you want to go fast – get a scooter!

Depth: You won't find a shallow dwelling fish in deep water. If you are a shallow dwelling diver, you must evolve to go deeper. That means learning more skills, drills, knowledge and equipment so that it all works together. Once you think like a fish, you can master your diving. Once mastered you can evolve. The evolution leads to more wonders and more life. My world.

(<http://www.technicaldivingafrica.com/home.html>)