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# Scuba Fitness: Lower body strength for scuba divers (Photos)



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*In southern California where shore diving is particularly popular, divers often have to overcome an obstacle course to get to their favorite dive spot. Beach access may be by stairs and always includes walking distances across grass, concrete, sand or rocks. After entering the water in varying surf conditions, the diver then “kicks out” or “turtles” on the surface to conserve air before dropping down to dive. Charter boat diving also requires divers to maneuver on decks and ladders on constantly rolling seas. Divers do all this under the weight of 50 to 70 pounds of scuba gear while wearing bulky and somewhat restrictive protective clothing. Lower body strength is essential for all divers, and especially important for southern California shore and boat diving.*



The Leg Press is an excellent alternative to the squat to improve lower body strength for diving.

Gretchen M. Ashton, Photographer

Divers can greatly improve lower body strength by performing foundational exercises such as the leg press or wall sit two to three times each week.

The Leg Press combines all major muscles of the legs and buttocks along with the abdomen

and low back. It is foundational in nature and is recommended as an alternative exercise to the squat. The leg press reduces risk of injury associated with the squat and accommodates certain knee and back conditions that would otherwise preclude the squat. Perform three sets of 15 repetitions with weight that is appropriate for the individual. A goal might be to press at least the diver's own body weight plus the additional 50 to 70 pounds equating to scuba gear.

The Wall Sit with a Ball Squeeze between the knees is a static variation to the leg press and can be performed almost anywhere and without gym equipment. Hold this position for one to three minutes. (See the slide show for an image of the wall sit.)

Steve DeNeef, owner of Underwater Schools of America (USA Scuba), stresses the importance of physical fitness for divers. In fact, fitness is a way of life for Steve who was certified in 1984 while serving in the Marine Corps as a drill instructor. He began working for USA Scuba in 1985. Steve and his wife Amy purchased the business in 1998 and became a Scuba Schools International (SSI) certifying facility in 1999.

USA Scuba offers local and international dives from reefs to wrecks. A local favorite is San Clemente Island and USA Scuba is currently accepting reservations for an adventure dive trip to Little Corn Island, Nicaragua in October.

USA Scuba has a large and well supplied dive shop, classrooms and a private pool for instruction. Classes include Open Water, Advanced Open Water, Stress and Rescue, Master Diver, Dive Control Specialist, Adaptive Scuba and Nitrox.

USA Scuba believes in safety and has all modern testing equipment. USA Scuba carries service parts on all manufacturers and service is completed within 7-10 days.

For more information: visit the Underwater Schools of America website.

**<http://www.usascuba.com/>**

## San Clemente Island Diving with USA Scuba