



Press information –June, 10TH 2023

SPORT & HEALTH

DIVING, THE BLUE VITAMIN OF WELL-BEING! A RECOGNIZED SPORT & HEALTH ACTIVITY SINCE 2021

Diving to fight stress, diving to rebuild after a traumatic shock or cancer, diving for greater autonomy in a situation of disability... diving is therapeutic and a genuine apprenticeship in resilience.

It's a fact: regular physical and sporting activity positively stimulates the brain. And the cardio-respiratory, musculoskeletal, and socio-psychological benefits of underwater activities are well proven!

Diving combines the benefits of sport, nature and aquatic immersion. So it's no coincidence that **scuba diving has been officially recognized as a health sport since 2021.**

Pioneer in this field, the FFESSM (Fédération Française d'Etudes et de Sports Sous-Marins) is developing a health-sport approach in a number of areas, bringing together clubs and members throughout France.

Its participation in the 2024 edition of the Paris International Dive Show is an opportunity to get a key message delivered : dive for health benefits.

The benefits of diving

Health is defined as a state of mental, social and physical well-being. Because of the unique way it is acted, scuba diving contributes to an undeniable sense of well-being, and in certain situations, is a vector for healing.

***Psychological and mental benefits:** contemplation, discovery, relaxation, exploration... diving is a highly effective "anti-stress" remedy, boosting self-confidence and self-control. It reduces the risk of burn-out, providing a healthy fatigue that facilitates sleep. Diving promotes a state of mindfulness that enables us to focus on the present moment, freeing ourselves from distracting thoughts.



These characteristics are similar to those developed in meditation. The practice of a mindfulness activity strengthens neuroplasticity, i.e. the interneuronal connections that enable these signals to flow. All mindfulness meditation, as experienced under the right conditions, positively directs attention from the prefrontal cortex (the thinking brain) to the limbic system (the emotional brain). **The neurochemical changes induced by immersion help the diver to feel good during and after the dive.**

***Social benefits:** Freediving and scuba diving encourage mutual aid and solidarity. It helps young people build their autonomy through collective action, with the necessary respect for safety rules. Link with each other is an important aspect of underwater activities. Whether in scuba or free diving, each diver needs the other... whether in a team or in pairs.

***Physical benefits:** 3-dimensional activity reduces joint stress and helps abdominal and buttock sheathing. On a sensory level, the experience of this new space, with its visual, auditory, vestibular, and proprioceptive modifications, contributes to relaxation. Breathing, which becomes fuller and slower as you become more aware of breathing out, is one of the great benefits of diving. **This respiratory coherence facilitates resilience and mindfulness meditation in relaxed diving conditions.**

Sport & Health, the FFESSM's hobbyhorse

The FFESSM, whose primary aim is to contribute to the personal development of individuals through underwater activities, is strongly committed to this field, through its President Dr Frédéric Di Meglio.

"Our commitment is a public health issue. It meets the objectives of the French government's national sport-health strategy, which aims to combat the increase in sedentary lifestyles, physical inactivity at all ages and the associated chronic diseases. Safe underwater sports and corresponding physical activity contribute to increasing life expectancy, improving well-being and autonomy by helping physical, psychological, cognitive and social capacities", explains Frédéric Di Meglio.

The FFESSM has developed 4 main lines of action :

- *Promoting health and well-being through physical and sporting activity (PSA) and diving.
- *Developing adapted physical activity (APA) and sports on prescription.
- *Protecting the health of participants and reinforcing the safety of practices.
- *Disseminating knowledge about health and PSA in underwater activities.

Mobilizing clubs, licensees and the general public around this concept **helps to shift the paradigm from the notion of a dangerous activity to a focus on the benefits of diving.**

Recognition in the Journal Officiel in 2021 of the sport-health training module for underwater activities for supervisors will enable training courses to be scaled up.

And brand new, an innovative European project will see the light in 2024 : **Erasmus + sport "One Health" with diving**, focusing on the benefits of diving and marine biodiversity.



"The 25th edition of the Paris International Dive Show is a fantastic showcase for the diving profession, its assets and underwater activities. Thanks to the presence and dynamism of the FFESSM, diving is also perceived as a vector of well-being, and even as an integral part of therapy", declares H el ene de Tayrac Senik, President and founder of Paris Dive Show.

In practice: diving and cancer, getting your head above water with Aquad emie Paris Plong ee

Since 2009, **Aquad emie Paris Plong ee**, chaired by Professor Jean-Pierre Lotz, Head of the **Medical Oncology and Cellular Therapy Department, H opital Tenon, APHP**, has enabled almost 150 cancer patients to discover and learn about scuba diving.

The aim is to introduce scuba diving to current and former cancer patients. The learning process begins with a baptism and culminates in the award of a Level I diver's certificate, enabling supervised dives at sea.

This original initiative is part of a global rebuilding process, inviting people to experience a physical and symbolic rebirth after the ordeal.

A Patient Therapeutic Education program based on diving

This sport-health program is designed to meet patients' needs on a case-by-case basis. It offers a 3-month Patient Therapeutic Education (PTE) program linked to diving, supervised and led by volunteers, **enabling all patients in remission from cancer, or in the process of going into remission, to acquire and maintain the resources they need to manage their lives after cancer** optimally, while restoring their self-esteem and maintaining their quality of life.

The program is organized around theoretical and practical training in diving at the club over a one-year period, culminating in a baptism and a week's diving the following year.

The positive impact of this program is crucial: *reintegration, work on self-image, challenge in the face of illness, resocialization, impact on post-traumatic stress, forgetting about the illness, impact on physical and psychological symptoms, reduction in relapse rates (breast or colon cancer), repair of the organism...*

"We're thinking about developing Aquad emie 'babies' in other oncology facilities, the difficulty being to mix an oncologist who isn't necessarily a diver with a club president who is a diver but not an oncologist," says Professor Jean-Pierre Lotz.

The use of scuba diving brings real benefits in the resilience process of patients or people suffering from post-traumatic stress. After long and arduous medical treatment, they regain their confidence and the feeling of body and mind.



Aquadémie Paris Plongée in figures:

- 150 patients trained to level 1 since 2009
- 9 patients trained to level 2
- 3 patients trained to level 3
- 10 baptisms in 2023 and 17 pit training sessions in 22-23
- First supervisor training (E1)

<https://ffesm.fr>

<https://ffesm-sportsanteidf.fr/>

<https://aquademieparisplongee.org>

25th edition
Paris International Dive Show
11-14 January 2024 - Paris
Parc des Expositions Porte de Versailles - Hall 4
www.salon-de-la-plongee.com

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