DIVING A beginner’s guide
Competitive diving, as it is known today, began in Sweden and Germany in the 18th century. Gymnasts would practice their tumbling routines by diving into the water. When Swedish divers visited Great Britain in the 19th century, they put on an extremely popular show that eventually led to the formation of the first diving organization in 1901—the Amateur Diving Association.

Diving is a sport that people all around the world participate in today. Athletes from 29 different countries took part in diving during the 2016 summer Olympics, with more than 300 junior diving clubs in the United States alone. Many of these divers are also members of swimming teams, especially at the high school level.

Diving involves aspects from multiple sports, which could get confusing at first. Please use this as a guide to help find your way through the murky waters on how to get started.

Congratulations! Your kid is thinking about participating in Diving. While trying a new sport can be a bit scary for everyone involved, we know that once you get started, you and your child are going to love it.
FUNDAMENTALS OF DIVING

Before your child jumps into the pool, it’s helpful to understand the basics of the sport and what to expect.

Types of Diving

Springboard
This event uses flexible “bouncy” boards that are set at heights of one meter and three meters above the water’s surface. You can also adjust these boards to be more stiff or flexible.

Synchronized Diving
This event uses either the three-meter springboard or the 10-meter platform. Two divers compete as a team and attempt to perform the same dive at the same time while mirroring one another.

Platform
This event uses static platforms set at five meters, seven-and-one-half meters, and 10 meters.

Scoring
A panel of five or more judges will look at five different elements of each dive and award the athlete a score between one and 10. The highest and lowest scores are usually discarded to reduce subjectivity, with the three remaining scores added together and multiplied by the degree of difficulty of the dive.

Elements of Judging

01 Starting Position
Divers can choose from a variety of different starting positions when on the board or platform, and will be judged on the execution of the position they choose.

02 The Approach
Divers should move to the end of the board in a smooth motion while displaying good form.

03 Takeoff
Divers should show good balance and control, and should start an acceptable distance from the platform or springboard.

04 Flight
Divers should maintain control of their bodies throughout the duration of their time in the air. They should also complete the required amount of rotation and revolution, depending on the elements of their dive.

05 Entry
The angle of entry into the water should be straight and cause a minimal splash.
Categories of Dives

Forward Group
The diver starts facing the water and then rotates down toward the water once in the air. Dives in this group vary from simple front dives to difficult forward, four-and-one-half somersaults.

Inward Group
The diver begins at the end of the board with their back to the water, like they were performing a backward dive, but then rotates toward the board.

Backward Group
The diver starts at the end of the diving board facing the ladder, with their back to the water, then rotates away from the board.

Twisting Group
Dives that have a twist (excluding armstands) fall into this group. The four types of twists: forward, backward, reverse, and inward.

Reverse Group
The diver starts facing the water as if they were performing a forward dive, but then rotates toward the board.

Armstand Group (Platform only)
The diver starts their dive by going up into a handstand at the end of the platform.

Body Positions

Pike
Legs are bent at the waist and go straight up toward the diver’s head. Arm placement often depends on the particular dive the diver is attempting.

Free
The diver has the option to use any of the other three positions, or any combination of them while performing a twisting dive.

Tuck
Legs are bent at the waist and the knees, with the diver’s thighs against their stomach and heels kept close to the buttocks. Feet and knees should be kept together and toes should stay pointed.

Straight
No bend at the knees or waist. The type of dive being performed defines where the arms are placed and whether or not the back can be bent.
Pool Standards

The diving pool can be part of the competitive swimming pool or a separate diving well. The sides must be painted in light blue or white, and the bottom must contrast (usually dark lines or design).*

Water Temperature
Water temperature of the pool should be no less than 26 degrees Celsius (78.8 degrees Fahrenheit).

Platforms
Platforms should be rigid and horizontal, and at least six meters (19.69 feet) long and two meters (6.56 feet) wide with a non-slip surface.

Springboards
Boards should be at least 4.8 meters (15.75 feet) long and one-half meter (1.64 feet) wide with a non-slip surface.

Pool Dimensions
A competitive diving pool should be at least 60 feet (18.29 meters) in length and 75 feet, 11 inches (22.89 meters) in width.

Water Depth
The water’s depth must be 3.4 meters (11.15 feet) under a one-meter springboard, and 3.7 meters (12.14 feet) under a three-meter springboard or a five-meter platform. It must be 4.1 meters (13.45 feet) under a 7.5-meter platform and 4.5 meters (14.76 feet) under a 10-meter platform.

*Mechanical surface agitation should be installed under each diving surface to help the divers see the surface of the water. This device is usually a small fountain located underneath the diving board that disrupts the surface of the water.
DIVING'S BASIC RULES

The rules of diving were designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. While most rules pertain to both platform and springboard diving, there are some slight variations between the two practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Springboard Diving</th>
<th>Platform Diving &amp; Synchronized Springboard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men must complete six dives per competition, while women must complete five.</td>
<td>Men must complete six dives in a competition, while women must complete five.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The diver can choose any difficulty level for each dive.</td>
<td>The first two dives of a competition must have a difficulty level of 2.0 for both men and women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One dive must come from each of the five categories (forward, back, reverse, inward, twisting).</td>
<td>The remaining dives can be any level of difficulty for both men and women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men may repeat one of the categories for their sixth dive. Women cannot repeat any.</td>
<td>Men and women must both complete dives from a minimum of four different categories, with at least one of the dives being forward-facing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Each dive must be different—no specific dives may be repeated.</td>
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FACT

MEN’S DIVING FIRST APPEARED IN THE OLYMPICS IN 1904, WHILE THE WOMEN’S EVENT WAS ADDED IN 1912.
DRESSED TO PLAY

You won’t find many mandatory articles of clothing for diving. Most of the things your child will use are to assist them in training.

**Swimming Suit**
Competitive swimmers wear special, form-fitting suits designed to help keep them aerodynamic as they spin through the air and enter the water while allowing more flexibility. Men typically wear suits called “Jammers” or “Briefs,” and women typically wear a one-piece swimsuit.

**Bag**
It’s nice to have a bag to keep your stuff together. Any gym bag should work fine, but there are also bags specific to aquatic sports available.

**Stretching Mat**
Stretching mats can be great for divers—not only do they provide a padded surface to work on flexibility, but they can also be a place to practice routines on dry land.

**Aqua Towel or Shammy**
Being able to dry off once the diver leaves the pool is always important. While towels work well, many divers choose to use a shammy, which is a small and highly-absorbent cloth.

**Wrist Guards**
Offers more support to a diver’s wrist when they hit the water with their palms.

**Trampoline**
While they’re not mandatory, trampolines can get athletes comfortable twisting in the air without jumping off a board into the water.

**FACT**
Springboards were made out of cedar when diving first became an Olympic sport. Today, they’re made from aircraft-grade aluminum, which generates a large amount of bounce.
AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPETITION | JUNIOR GIRLS

**SPRINGBOARD**

<table>
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<td>Divers perform four voluntary dives from different categories with a degree of difficulty no more than 7.2 from the one-meter board, and no more than 7.6 from the three-meter board. That’s followed by three optional dives from different categories.</td>
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<td>Divers perform five voluntary dives, one from each category, with a degree of difficulty no more than 9.0 from the one-meter board, and no more than 9.5 from the three-meter board. That’s followed by four optional dives from different categories.</td>
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**PLATFORM**

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<td>Divers perform four voluntary dives with a degree of difficulty no more than 7.6, and three optional dives from different categories. Dives can only be done from the five-meter and 7.5-meter platforms.</td>
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<td>Divers perform four voluntary dives from different categories with a degree of difficulty no more than 8.0, which is followed by three optional dives from different categories. They may dive from five-meter, 7.5-meter, or 10-meter platforms and must use at least five different categories in the competition.</td>
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| **12-13**                         |             |
| Divers perform four voluntary dives from different categories with a degree of difficulty no more than 7.2 from the one-meter board, and no more than 7.6 from the three-meter board. That’s followed by three optional dives from different categories. |             |

| **16-18**                         |             |
| Divers perform five voluntary dives, one from each category, with a degree of difficulty no more than 9.0 from the one-meter board, and no more than 9.5 from the three-meter board. That’s followed up by five optional dives from five different categories without limit. |             |

| **12-13**                         |             |
| Divers perform four voluntary dives with a degree of difficulty no more than 7.6 and three optional dives from different groups. Dives can only be done from the five-meter and 7.5-meter platforms. |             |

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**APPREHEND** The steps a diver takes toward the end of the board at the start of their dive, which usually involves three or more steps.

**ARMSTAND DIVE** A dive that is done from a motionless armstand at the end of the platform. These dives are not allowed to be done on a springboard.

**BACKWARD DIVE** A category of dive where the diver begins with their back toward the water.

**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY** The level of each dive, indicating how difficult it is to execute. It’s used to help determine the final score and ranges from 1.2 to 4.8.

**ENTRY** The point where the diver makes contact with the water.

**EXECUTION** How well the diver carries out of the dive. They aim to maintain control throughout to score highly.

**FORWARD DIVE** A category of dive where the diver begins facing the water and then rotates toward the water.

**FULCRUM** The wheel on the springboard that divers turn to adjust the board’s flexibility.

**INWARD DIVE** A category of dive where the diver begins with their back toward the water and then rotates toward the board after takeoff.

**JUDGE** An official who scores after each dive based on a number of different categories.

**OPTIONAL DIVES** A more difficult dive than voluntary. The diver can add any extra movements they want and are not restricted by a degree of difficulty cap.

**PIKE** A position where the diver bends their legs at the waist up toward their head. The legs are straight and the toes are pointed.

**PLATFORM** Solid diving boards that competitors jump from, also known as firm boards.

**REVERSE DIVE** A category of dive where the diver faces toward the water and then rotates back toward the board.

**RIP** The point of entry into the water. When a diver’s hands are perfectly perpendicular to the water upon entry, the splash will sound like ripping paper. It leads to minimal splash, which all divers hope to achieve.

**SOMERSAULT** A complete rotation of the body that moves heels over head.

**SPRINGBOARD** A diving board that adds extra spring to the takeoff, competitors can adjust them to make them more and less flexible.

**STRAIGHT** A position in which the body is straight from head to toe, with the feet together and the toes pointed.

**SYNCHRONIZED DIVING** Two divers perform the same dive at the same time. The goal is to have the dives mirror one another.

**TAKEOFF** The moment the diver leaves the board and goes into the air to begin the dive.

**TOWER** The entire diving platform.

**TUCK** A position in which the diver bends their legs at the knees and waist, bringing their thighs to their stomach and heels toward their buttocks.

**TWISTING DIVE** Any dive that includes a twist, whether it’s forward, backward, reverse, or inward.

**VOLUNTARY DIVE** Also known as required dives. These are typically easier dives limited by their total degree of difficulty.
WAYS TO PLAY

With a little research, you should be able to find a diving program that fits your child’s interest level. There are several types of programs, each with varying structures and commitment levels.

WAYS TO PLAY

Swimming Lessons

Introduction on getting into the water, pool safety, and swimming basics. The level of complexity goes up by completing classes—your child will need to know how to swim to the edge of the pool after completing a dive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age:</th>
<th>Season Length:</th>
<th>Travel:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 and Up</td>
<td>Swimming lessons can take place year-round; you’ll have to talk to your local pool for specifics.</td>
<td>Will have to travel to the pool.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Commitment:
Lessons range from occurring once a week to a few times a week. Each lesson usually lasts from 30 minutes to an hour.

Structure:
Your child will be in the pool with a swimming instructor. They’ll begin by getting used to the water, being comfortable in it, and will learn new skills and techniques as they progress through the different levels.

WAYS TO PLAY

School

Prepare for college and participate as a member of your school against other schools in your area. Divers will often be part of the school’s swimming team.

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<td>14-18</td>
<td>Seasons often run from August through November, or November through February, depending on your state.</td>
<td>Local travel to nearby cities is required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Commitment:
Practices and meets can occur throughout the week and weekend, depending on the team’s schedule.

Structure:
Teams compete against other high schools. Coaches are paid and student-athletes are generally skilled, depending on the division and school district.
### Ways to Play

**Club**

Coaches at this level continue to work on perfecting each of diving’s positions and categories. As athletes get older, the level of competition increases.

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<tr>
<td>8 and Up</td>
<td>Events will be held throughout the year.</td>
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**Commitment:**
Practices are often held two to four days a week, and the sessions can run from 60-90 minutes. Expect to participate in meets that take place on weekends.

**Structure:**
Clubs are usually broken up by age groups (7-10, 11-12, 13-14, and 15-and-older teams), but if some areas don’t have the same amount of participants as others, the number of programs shrink. As the age group increases, so does the level of competition.

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**Fact:**
The most difficult dive to date is a reverse 4.5 somersault in the pike position, which is rated 4.8; however, more difficult dives are anticipated by FINA.
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www.teamunify.com

ABOUT USA DIVING
USA Diving, Inc. is the national governing body of diving in the United States as recognized by the United States Olympic Committee and is a member of United States Aquatic Sports Inc., the United States’ member of FINA (the International Swimming Federation).

www.usadiving.com