

FROM RECREATIONAL DIVER TO TECHNICAL DIVER

SSI Extended Range · XR Nitrox · Technical Extended Range · Normoxic Trimix

01 - THE WALL

Most recreational divers hit a ceiling and don't know there's a door through it. They finish their Advanced course, log a handful of dives, and start wondering why it all feels the same. The technical track exists - they simply don't know what it looks like or whether it is built for someone like them. The jump from recreational to technical looks intimidating from the outside. It isn't. It is structured, progressive, and entirely achievable - for any diver willing to slow down, build deliberately, and let the water do the teaching.

The SSI XR track is not a different sport. It is the same sport - with smaller margins and higher standards.

02 - THE SHIFT

Technical diving is not about being extreme. It is about being more deliberate, capable, and more aware underwater. The divers who make this transition describe it as the moment diving finally made complete sense. Every level on the SSI XR track forces you to build something specific. The progression is not arbitrary, each course closes a real gap before the next one opens.

What changes on the technical track:

- Planning replaces spontaneity on every dive
- Decompression replaces no-stop limits
- Multiple gases replace a single cylinder
- Every dive requires a written pre-dive plan

THE PHILOSOPHY

Awareness - not depth - is the real measure of a technical diver.

The rec to tech transition is not a jump. It is a progression - one that mirrors exactly what makes any diver better: deliberate practice, time in the water, and a willingness to be a student again. The divers who thrive on the XR track are not the most fearless. They are the most patient. They understand that awareness - not depth - is the real measure of a capable technical diver.

!! CRITICAL INSIGHT

Your recreational foundation must be genuinely solid before XR begins.

The single most common mistake on the technical track is rushing the transition. Not just certified - automatic. Buoyancy must require zero conscious thought. Navigation must be instinct. Rescue awareness must be second nature.

Before starting XR, you should be able to:

- Hold a perfect hover for 60 seconds without moving
- Manage a panicked diver scenario without stress
- Gas plan a dive to 40m before you enter the water

★ Why Malta - and Why Dive Systems

Malta offers year-round visibility averaging 30m, manageable water temperatures, and a concentration of world-class sites within a small geographic area. The Um El Faroud wreck, the deeper Gozo sites, and the technical training grounds around Exiles Bay make Dive Systems Malta one of the most effective places on the planet to complete the SSI XR track - from first XR breath to Technical Extended Range.

SSI Diamond Dive Centre · 40+ Years in Malta · Full XR to CCR Instructor Capability

THE SSI REC TO XR PATHWAY

Every stage. Every milestone. Every fun dive in between.

STEP 1 · SSI OPEN WATER

Starting point · 18m limit · Core skills

Foundation certification. 18m depth limit. Core skills - buoyancy, ascents, mask clearing, buddy procedures. Every technical diver starts here.

10–20 fun dives between each stage

STEP 2 · SSI ADVANCED ADVENTURER

Do this immediately

Do this immediately · 30m limit · Night & wreck dives unlocked

Complete immediately after Open Water. Raises depth limit to 30m, unlocks five adventure disciplines, and opens night and wreck diving. Your real starting point as a diver.

10–20 fun dives between each stage

STEP 3 · SSI SPECIALTIES

Foundation specialties

Buoyancy · Nitrox · Deep · Navigation · Build before you jump

Build the recreational foundation before the technical jump: Buoyancy, Nitrox, Deep, and Navigation. Each one closes a specific gap the XR track will expose if left open.

10–20 fun dives between each stage

STEP 4 · SSI STRESS & RESCUE

Prerequisite

Non-negotiable prerequisite · Changes how you think on every dive

Non-negotiable before any XR training. SSI Stress and Rescue changes how you think on every dive. You stop thinking only about yourself and start scanning for problems.

10–20 fun dives between each stage

STEP 5 · SSI EXTENDED RANGE

First XR cert

First XR cert · 45m · Decompression stops · Stage cylinders

Your first technical certification. 45m depth limit on air or Nitrox. Introduces decompression stops, stage cylinder management, and proper technical dive planning.

10–20 fun dives between each stage

STEP 6 · SSI XR NITROX

XR Level 2

Multiple gases · Decompression planning · Technical mindset commits

Multiple Nitrox mixes for decompression diving. Oxygen exposure tracking across multiple cylinders. The planning mindset fully commits here - recreational thinking ends.

10–20 fun dives between each stage

STEP 7 · SSI TECHNICAL EXTENDED RANGE

XR Level 3

60m depth · Full deco procedures · Real technical diving

60m depth limit. Full decompression procedures. Real technical diving. Equipment configuration tightens significantly. Every skill built to this point is tested.

10–20 fun dives between each stage

STEP 8 · SSI NORMOXIC TRIMIX

XR Level 4

Helium in the mix · Narcosis managed · Top of the XR open-circuit track

Helium enters the mix. Narcosis is actively managed rather than accepted. The upper boundary of the XR open-circuit track before CCR becomes the logical next step.

10–20 fun dives between each stage

★ **TECHNICAL DIVER - SSI XR CERTIFIED** ★

Extended Range · XR Nitrox · Technical Extended Range · Normoxic Trimix

THE FOUR SSI XR CERTIFICATIONS

Each stage builds on the last - skipping is not possible, rushing is not advisable

The four XR certifications are not interchangeable - they form a deliberate sequence.

The four XR certifications are not interchangeable - they form a deliberate sequence. Each one demands the previous level as a lived, automatic foundation before the next layer of complexity is introduced.

SSI EXTENDED RANGE

45m depth limit · Decompression stops · Stage cylinder · Single gas

01

Your first technical certification. Introduces decompression stops, stage cylinder management, and proper technical dive planning to 45m. The physical skills are an extension of...

What unlocks:

Dives to 45m with planned decompression. Sites previously inaccessible. The Um El Faroud in full. Access to Malta's deeper technical training grounds.

Deco dive planning

Stage management

45m depth limit

XR entry cert

SSI XR NITROX

Multiple gas mixes · Deco on Nitrox · O2 tracking across cylinders

02

Multiple Nitrox mixes for decompression diving. You track oxygen exposure across three cylinders simultaneously, plan decompression schedules before the dive, and execute them...

What unlocks:

Shorter decompression stops using high-Nitrox mixes. Longer bottom times. The full technical planning workflow for every dive.

Multi-gas planning

O2 exposure tracking

Optimised deco

Gas switching

SSI TECHNICAL EXTENDED RANGE

60m depth limit · Full deco procedures · Multiple stage cylinders

03

The jump to 60m introduces genuine decompression diving with tighter gas planning, longer ascent profiles, and real consequences for poor decision-making at depth. Equipment...

What unlocks:

The deepest recreational and technical wrecks in the Malta-Gozo area. Full technical dive profiles. The platform for Trimix training.

60m dives

Extended deco

Multi-stage

Technical mastery

SSI NORMOXIC TRIMIX

Helium in the mix · Narcosis managed · Top of the XR open-circuit track

04

Adding helium reduces narcosis at depth, allowing clearer thinking where air would significantly impair judgment. Trimix requires pre-planned gas blending, precise partial pressure...

What unlocks:

Technical dives where narcosis was previously the limiting factor. A clear, deliberate mind at depths most recreational divers will never see. The foundation for CCR training.

Helium blends

Narcosis control

PP management

CCR foundation

IS THIS FOR YOU?

If you have 50+ dives and feel ready for more -
this track was built for you...

Dive Systems Malta · Sliema · divesystemsmalta.com

BOOK A FREE DISCOVERY CALL

Talk to the team at Dive Systems Malta

about where you'd enter this pathway, what equipment you'd need, and what your first XR course would look like...
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