

## Fundies – from 50 to 5000

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I don't do mediocre. If I'm teaching a class then I teach it well or not at all. In fact I'm so confident in the quality of my classes I run, I offer a money back guarantee if you feel you've gained nothing from your time with me. And after my experiences this summer I now have proof to back up my claim. In February I organised a Fundies class in Tutukaka, knowing the least experienced person was 'only' a Master Instructor with 2,000+ dives, and I was still able to deliver a great class. This summer I have delivered the 'same' course to an amazingly varied selection of students, all of whom have had a wow-experience. As the title refers to – Fundies is an awesome class, no matter whether the group of students has 50 or 5000 dives between them!

So what makes this class so unique?

Firstly this is a course which strives for excellence. Good enough is not good enough and because I video all of the underwater work, every student can see exactly what they are doing well and what needs improvement. I don't need to be a harsh critic of your dive skills, as you will always be your own worst critic. Simply watching yourself on TV inevitably leads to a desire to improve. It doesn't matter how good you are at the start, even the best and most experienced divers will see things they want to fix.

Secondly this is a class which focuses on the basic skills, the skills usually glossed over in the race towards ever higher qualifications. Developing the most efficient finning techniques possible, gaining fine control over your buoyancy, tweaking your trim until you are always positioned exactly as required – all of these skills are the building blocks upon which all other skills are based. Once you have full control of yourself underwater everything else becomes easier.

Thirdly the class provides enough flexibility for me to deliver it at varying levels. Managing task loading whilst underwater is a crucial skill if you want to move onto more technical or challenging dives and it is relatively simple for me to tweak the level of task loading for each student. My aim is to ensure everyone is working at full capacity for the entire of the class – that is how you get the most out of your time underwater. With less experienced divers I take on more of the burden underwater, with highly experienced divers I take more of a back seat.



Finally there is the theory. Although GUE Fundamentals is 'only' a nitrox certification class, usually taught in 10m of water, I am required at minimum to be an experienced and active trimix diver in order to retain my instructor rating. This means I can easily expand on any theory discussions, so I never deliver content which is already fully understood by the students. I want to expand your mind as well as your skill level during this class and so far I have always succeeded.

So how does a class starting with 50 dives vary from a class with 5000?



There two main areas of difference, habits and awareness. It is easier to learn something new than it is to unlearn and then relearn a skill, particularly if you have well ingrained habits. The more dives you have at the start of the class the more likely it is you'll have bad habits, which will take time to break. However, experienced divers tend to have far more comfort and situational awareness underwater, which helps with the teamwork aspect of the class. When I ran the class with the 50 dive group I took the lead in running the dives; ensured everyone kept track of their gas; made sure we completed all the necessary skill and I acted as a stable buoyancy reference. With the 5000 dive group I gave them a dive brief and as far as possible allowed them to run the dive, which immediately created a far higher task loading.

The point I'm making is this: Any diver with any skill level can join a Fundies class and I know it will be beneficial to them. And with my money back guarantee what have you got to lose?