Frequently asked questions regarding our 'Reef CPR™' program and training. Feel to contact us for further details.

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1 What does Reef CPR stand for?
Coral Preservation and Restoration.

2 What is the purpose of Reef CPR?
The purpose of Reef CPR is to provide recreational divers, dive centres, resorts, as well as conservation NGO's and local communities with simple, yet effective strategies to restore and maintain the health of their coral reef sites.

A key message of Reef CPR is that our marine playgrounds need ongoing care and maintenance just like our land-based ones do. For example, we maintain and employ regular care of land based parks and gardens, yet we don’t do the same for our underwater equivalents. When trees and plants are damaged in a resort, they are replaced, but this doesn’t happen with the coral on the reef in front of the resort.

Reef CPR recognises that a large number of divers (and snorkellers) want to help and leave reefs better than they found them.

Reef CPR is an important 'next step' to any existing volunteer program that conducts coral surveys such as Reef Check. Reef CPR helps provide solutions to correct the loss of coral and that is identified by the surveys.

3 Who is it designed for?
Reef CPR is designed to empower individuals with the knowledge and skillsets necessary to restore and preserve their local reefs and help them to become stewards of ecologically sustainable use of their reefs. It is not complicated and does not require a high level of education to understand and use.

Reef CPR programs are designed for all ages and ability levels, from divers (and snorkellers) that want to take a more proactive role in preserving the reefs they love, to snorkelers, land-based volunteers and even activities for children.
We believe any dive centre or resort operating in a coral area needs at least 2 staff trained in Reef CPR.

4 What does Reef CPR cover?

Reef CPR covers three priority steps as shown in the diagram.

Step 1: Reduce and stop actions that are causing reef damage. This might be anchors, fin kicks or stepping on coral, Crown of Thorns starfish (COTS), sewage discharge, plastics, drift wood, toxic sunscreens, or unsustainable fishing practices such as blast fishing or use of cyanide. This is analogous to medical first aid where the victim is removed from the danger.

Step 2: Increase natural coral recruitment and survival. Natural recovery of coral may not happen for numerous reasons, but there are some common basic reasons we see around the world that Reef CPR can address. Where possible, we encourage natural recovery before resorting to Step 3, 'Assisted Recovery' as it is more costly and nature does a magnificent job by herself when given the chance. Step 2 actions may include stabilising and landscaping loose coral rubble that prevents coral larvae from successfully colonising, removing predators such as COTS or algae (seaweeds), introducing urchins, deploying artificial reef units, Biorock structures, or reducing fishing pressure and allowing herbivorous fish to return and keep the seaweeds in check.

Step 3: Implement a program of assisted recovery. Step 3 is the point where you have decided that natural recovery is not an option or adequate. Coral recovery may be accelerated via strategies such as planting rescued, or cultured coral frags or...
colonies, setting up a coral adoption program, or seeding the area with colonised substrate or coral larvae.

5 What does Reef CPR training cover?

Each location and each reef rescue requirements are unique as well as the resources and team available to implement them. Therefore, we cover foundational information and strategies applicable to any situation and include specialty training (if necessary) to suit your particular reef damage, coral species and needs. This includes using photos and samples of corals from your actual reefs to be rescued.

Topics include but are not limited to:

- Essential coral biology.
- Identification of compatible corals.
- Handling of coral fragments.
- Checking for disease.
- How to ‘think like a coral’...a guide to determining where to plant the fragments, density, aesthetics, and water quality conditions required for each spp.
- How to plant branching and boulder fragments on to natural and constructed substrate with and without cement/putty.
- How to re-anchor large broken or toppled plate or boulder coral colonies.
- Involving customers in the rescue and tips for guided tours.
- Monitoring survival and record keeping.
- Skill assessment for certification.

Prior to arranging training for you, we would discuss and confirm the topics most relevant for you.

6 How long does Reef CPR training take?

The basic training can be completed in 4 to 6 days. This can be accomplished in one block or spread over several weeks and there is the option to include additional performance reviews (either conducted on site or remotely) to check if the CPR is being conducted effectively. However, to maximise the effectiveness of a reef rescue program (including Reef CPR training) it may be beneficial to engage us for a 3-month, 6 month or 12 month support program.
7 What experience or skills do I need?
- Qualified diver with minimum of 20 dives conducted within the last 2yrs for implementing advanced Step 3 strategies, however many strategies can be implemented using only snorkel.
- Good buoyancy control.
- Moderate English (speaking).
- Desire to help!

8 Who conducts the training?
All Reef CPR training must be conducted by Sustainable Oceans International (SOI) to ensure quality. At present the training is conducted SOI's Coral Restoration Team Leader John Walch and SOI Director David Lennon. We will be running 'train the trainer' programs in the future so that there will be more instructors worldwide that are able to conduct Reef CPR courses.

If you are interested in becoming a Reef CPR instructor, feel free to contact us.

9 Where do you conduct the training?
To maximise the value of the training it would be best for this to be done at your site so that we can tailor the program towards the issues effecting your reef(s).

However, there are some situations where you might simply require the standard CPR techniques for coral rescue and propagation which could be conducted at a location other than your actual reef site.

10 How much does it cost?
We always aim to keep the costs of these courses as low as possible. The course fee depends upon duration, location, number of trainers and expenses such as dive gear and boats. Some clients can provide dive gear and boats or accommodation free of charge to help reduce costs.

Please contact us to discuss exactly what you need, and we can confirm exact costs.

11 Is there a certificate?
Yes. Once you pass the course you receive your certificate. It is important that Reef CPR is conducted by certified divers to maximise the success of the efforts and to prevent poor results that may cause some to believe that Reef CPR does not work. If this happens, it does not help you, the reef or other CPR programs.
12 Can we promote our Reef CPR efforts?

Absolutely!! We encourage monitoring and before and after photos of your reef. Promoting your efforts encourages others to do the same and demonstrates you can make a positive difference. It can also help you raise funding for more training and certification of divers.

If you are a dive centre with at least two active Reef CPR certified divers and you are conducting our minimum required reef rescue criteria, you are eligible to promote the fact that you are a 'Reef CPR' dive centre.

We developed Reef CPR because we believe it fulfils a desperate need amongst the dive community. We can no longer keep using our coral dive sites without spending some time to take care of them and repair damages. Promoting your CPR efforts will encourage others to become active in helping reduce and repair impacts to reefs.

13 How do I find out more?

Contact David Lennon at:

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