

GUE Basic Fundamentals Report

About pockets, boltsnaps and repetition

My year as a GUE NextGen participant began at the end of 2025 with the Basic Fundamentals course. My instructor was Sérgio Schirato, a highly skilled and patient teacher, as well as an incredible person. I started with the e-learning modules, which turned out to be much better than I expected. The platform is very engaging and adaptive, adjusting to each student's previous knowledge and confidence level on the topics covered. Combining videos, quizzes, and slides, an AI-based coach presents the content in a very interactive and effective way.

Alongside the e-learning content, we had our first remote meeting with Sérgio to cover the introductory theoretical module. He explained what GUE is, how it was founded, how its courses are structured, and focused particularly on the philosophy behind the Basic Fundamentals course. My teammate, Susanna Braga, an excellent diver, was also starting this new journey with me.

A few weeks after this first online session, we traveled to São Sebastião, on the northern coast of São Paulo, to begin our in-person training. Sérgio kindly hosted us at his home and provided all the necessary support—equipment, logistics, and transportation to the dive sites.

The course consisted of three intense days of training. We began with a theoretical session covering topics such as buoyancy, trim, propulsion, and weighting. Then we moved on to the practical part, where we got to know the GUE configuration and adjusted our gear (harness fitting, hose routing, etc.). What impressed me the most was how every single piece of equipment has a reason to be where it is—everything is minimalist, standardized, and highly functional.



Next, we practiced the Basic Five drill on land. After several repetitions, we completed a swimming assessment in the pool and then went for our first open-water dive. We analyzed our gases, prepared our equipment, reviewed the GUE EDGE pre-dive checklist, and entered the water. We practiced propulsion techniques, trim and balance, and the Basic Five skills. The water was cold (19°C) with limited visibility (less than 3 meters), which made it challenging—but we managed to perform well.

The next day began early with the S-drill, the gas-sharing procedure. At first, it was quite difficult due to our lack of familiarity with the long-hose configuration, but with repetition and Sérgio's patience, we became proficient. The dry runs were an especially valuable part of the GUE methodology, building muscle memory before getting in the water and making the underwater sessions far more productive.

After the dry training, we completed two more dives to apply the new skills and refine our techniques. Back on land, we did the swimming and physical fitness tests, followed by another theoretical module in the afternoon. Later, we had another dry practice: deploying the SMB (Surface Marker Buoy). Sérgio carefully demonstrated each step, offering valuable tips about team positioning, different types of SMBs, and their uses. It became very clear how important the positioning of each boltsnap is, and how their reach varies depending on the purpose of use. I also learned about the use of pockets, something that had never even crossed my mind before—and now I can't imagine diving without them. The specific placement of every piece of equipment truly reflects a holistic approach, as it directly influences our behavior, as well as the safety of both the gear and the diver in every situation, especially under stress.

On the third and final day, we returned to the dive site under sunny skies and warmer water. We repeated and refined all the previously learned skills until we reached a comfortable level of proficiency. Now, it's all about continued practice to make these techniques more natural.

After the final dives, we disassembled and cleaned our gear, returned to base, and said our goodbyes. Beyond the in-water sessions, the moments of teamwork, learning, and experience-sharing were incredibly rewarding.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the HQ GUE team, GUE Brazil, Jenn Thompson, and especially Sérgio Schirato, who made this experience possible. I also want to thank my dive teammate Susanna, as well as Captain Wagner, diver Humberto, and cook Vera for all the logistical and on-site support that made this course such a success.





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