



Kit Cat

Tips on a catalogue of kit

Care

Kit List:-

Mask ✓

Fins ✓

BCD ✓

Weight Systems ✓

Exposure Suits

● Drysuits ✓

● Wetsuits

Regulators ✓

SMBs ✓

Reels ✓

Lights ✓

Care ✓



So you've invested your hard earned cash and you want to make sure that you get the best out of it. Treat it well, store it properly add a little TLC and it will serve you well for many years. But what does that mean.

At the very least always rinse all items in fresh clean water after use. But there some other things you can do for each item.

● **Mask-** If you've bought nothing else this is probably the one thing you own – after all you want to see clearly all that wonderful & colourful underwater stuff. Almost the first skill you'll have learnt is mask de-fogging; the spit and polish thing. Even though masks are essentially water tight, microbes from your saliva and the waters you dive in can get inside the frame. If the frame is coloured you probably won't notice but if like mine it's transparent you can get a pretty disgusting looking growth of gunk. A soak in mild solution of something like Milton will render it more savoury. Milton will also help with mildew on the fabric strap. And if it really gets too much most masks can be completely dismantled. Come and speak to one of us or ask your local dive shop to show you how yours works. A brand new mask may have a slight coating of silicone on the lens from the manufacturing process which makes it prone to fog. With use this soon disappears but if it's not soon enough for you rub a small amount of toothpaste (which is a very fine abrasive) over the glass and rinse. It should help.

Your mask would have come in a box; when not on your face that's where your mask should be. Not stuffed in the foot of your fin for long periods. You don't want it squashed at the bottom of your gear bag, distorting the skirt. Or worse stand on it or have something heavy like weights or a cylinder fall onto it. Not only will the box protect it from blunt force trauma but also isolate it from other substances which could cause chemical damage. And I don't just mean sun cream accidents. Much of your stuff is made from silicone and rubber based materials which over time can have a reaction with each other. Have you every found one of those elastic band balls at the back of a drawer and discovered the bands have stuck together or perished or the colours have bled into each other? All these things can also happen to your gear.



● **Fins** – Your attention here should be on the straps. Check them over to make sure they're not perished or split. Inspect the clips for damage or cracks. If you can, avoid actually unclipping the straps as that's when you're most likely to lose the socket bit from the fin (really irritating). Have spares. Store them flat or hanging not standing on the tips



● **Regulators** – Don't forget the dust cap. Ensure it's dry when you secure it before a dunk in the rinsing tank. While we're on the subject please respect the signs; more often than not the resort or centre will have more than one vat each labelled for specific items; Regs / Cameras ONLY, BCDs, boots suits & fins.



This is to try and keep any sand and crud away from the more delicate bits. And don't depress the purge button when you rinse, which can allow water to seep into the diaphragm mechanism which could cause damage. And send your regs off once a year to be serviced to have any dried on residue removed, the filter, O-rings and other perishable parts replaced.

- **BCD** – Every so often unscrew the dump valves to clean & dry the components. Check the releases for damage, keep any Velcro fasteners clear of particles and inspect the LPI hose for perish/cracks. Be aware the LPI Schroeder valve connector has O-rings too. If you can, store your BCD hanging and partially inflated to keep it at its best.



- **Wetsuit** – nothing wrong with a run through the washing machine but go easy on the detergent. As with any of your gear, do not hang your suit in the garage. I know it seems like a good place (got the height and it doesn't matter about the drips) but fuel fumes, those hydrocarbons, will cause permanent harm to the fabric.

- **Dry suit** – it doesn't matter if you get the inside wet when you rinse your dry suit and probably a good thing as you almost certainly sweat a bit. Hang feet up on a dry suit hanger or improvise with poles or drain-pipe. If you have to store it folded make sure you keep the zip done up and straight. It is a costly business getting one replaced. Keep the zip lubricated with beeswax or special ziplube compounds. In fact there is a bewildering array of proprietary products to clean and care for almost every piece of kit. You can get special anti-fungal spray and use desiccating gel packs in the boots. As with your BCD, pay attention to the dump valve and inflator.



- **Underclothes** – sure, you'll want to wash them but do bear in mind thermals and woolly bear/weasel/baby-grow type garments will lose their thermal properties if you over-wash or use strong detergents. Read the manufacturers care labels.

- **Reel** – Check it runs freely from a mechanical point of view and get into the habit of unwinding and rewinding the line after you've used it. Between you hanging on one end and the SMB bobbing up and down on the other the tension is highly likely to be uneven and probably too tight which could cause snagging or tangling – that's the last thing you want.



- **Cylinder** – Check that the O-ring is still there and not perished. Keep your cylinder in-test, i.e. get it visually inspected every 2½ years, hydrostatic every 5 years and if you use EAN_x have it O₂ cleaned every 12 months. It will be marked to prove it is in-test and a reputable filling station won't fill it without valid certification.

It's impossible to cover everything here so if you're not sure about anything just ask.

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