



Kit Cat Tips on a catalogue of kit

MASK

Coming up:-

Snorkel

Fins

BCD

Regulator

Exposure Suits

The mask is your window on the underwater world. There is nothing more irritating or likely to spoil your dive than a leaking, fogging and uncomfortable mask. A very wide variety of masks is available to suit all shapes, sizes and budgets, so what are the things to consider when selecting one:

- **Nose Pocket** – for equalising the air space and clearing water
- **Tempered Glass** - you are going into a pressurised environment and tempered glass is less likely to break into shards. For those with impaired vision prescription glass can be fitted.
- **Skirt** - Clear Silicon or Black rubber Skirt with a double seal - a clear skirt may give better peripheral vision for torch signals etc.
- **Adjustable strap** – good quality and easy to adjust. If you find the strap tangles your hair neoprene covers are widely available. Try and avoid the type which replaces your strap as these often have Velcro fasteners which don't offer the same elasticity.
- **Volume** – a low volume mask is easier to clear as the reduced air space means less water to expel should it flood. The reduced amount of air means they are less buoyant so fewer forces are likely to make the skirt flex and leak.
- **Good field of vision** – you don't want to feel blinkered or claustrophobic. Photographers often prefer a larger faceplate but consider the extra volume.
- **Airtight Seal** - it is a very personal piece of equipment as all faces are different. Hold the mask to your face and gently breathe in through your nose. It should stay put with very little effort and feel comfortable. Try on as many as you can.

Now you've found the perfect mask a couple of tips.

The manufacturing process can cause an oily film of silicon to be deposited on the glass which causes fogging. You need to rub it off gently with a fine abrasive – toothpaste is ideal. But don't forget to rinse away all traces.

And if you are lucky enough to be diving in sunnier climes whilst you should protect yourself from the sun avoid excessive use of sun cream on your face as this can impair the efficacy of the seal.

For those of you with facial fuzz under your nose you don't need to shave it off, simply adopt the Hercule Poirot high gloss style and smear on some Vaseline.

And of course, as with any of your gear, always rinse it in clean, fresh water after use. Persuade your dive shop to give you in a hard case to keep it in and protect it when it's knocking about in the bottom of your gear bag or crate.

Your local dive shop will be very happy to help with your selection.