



# Atlanta Underwater Explorers

## AUE Bubbles

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## Gear, Practice, Training Are the Keys to Successful Self-Rescue in Scuba Diving

By John Brumm

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*"In a crisis, the real enemy is often not the immediate threat, but rather your reaction to it."*

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At depth, you shouldn't count on your dive buddy to be armslength away when you find yourself in a jam. Learning how to rely on yourself first and your buddy second is going to radically improve your chances for avoiding panic - and maybe even survival.

### 1. Never Stop Training

For sharpening rusty diving skills, and for acquiring new ones, there's no substitute for continuing education. Probably the best way to develop self-rescue skills is to learn how to prevent and manage problems that can occur underwater, and you can accomplish this by taking a PADI Rescue Diver course. In addition to learning to recognize stress in other divers and rescuing panicking divers, the course also teaches self-rescue. Nothing will boost your confidence and hone your diving skills more than this course; plus, being able to rehearse emergencies helps you to role-play, and therefore become familiar with, the kind of action that would need to be taken in the case of a dive emergency.

### 2. Never Pass Up a Chance to Practice

Performing self-rescue skills on a regular basis improves technique, which can turn a potentially high-stress emergency into a manageable situation. As long as conditions are ideal and you've told your dive buddy that you'd like to practice some skills, why not rehearse some of them before exiting the water? At your safety stop, replace and clear your mask or switch to your alternate air source. On the surface, practice deploying a safety sausage or taking off and putting on your kit. At the swim step, imagine yourself in trouble and ditch your weights - put them on the swim step instead of dropping them. Sure, unbuckling a weight belt or pulling weight releases may not seem like a skill you'd need to rehearse, but dive-accident data indicates many diver deaths could have been prevented if the diver had only ditched his or her weights. By practicing these skills at the end of the dive, you waste no dive time, and with little or no water over your head, the risk is minimal.

## Gear, Practice, Training Are the Keys to Successful Self-Rescue in Scuba Diving – Cont.

### 3. Gear Up For Self-Rescue

Equipment alone will not make you competent at self-rescue, but having the right gear sure helps. First on the list is an alternate air source. An octopus is standard equipment today, but since a total second stage meltdown is incredibly rare, carrying an octo is really for the benefit of your buddy. For yourself, you'd want a redundant air supply, ranging from a Spare Air-type unit to a fully rigged pony bottle. Also important are cutting tools for dealing with entanglements. Some divers carry a knife mounted where it can be grabbed with either hand and deployed using only one-hand, along with a pair of cutting shears to maximize cutting options. Having a pocket light of some sort is good too, and of course, a signal tube and an audible signaling device for surface work are must-have items.

### 4. Maintain a Self-Rescue Mindset

In a crisis, the real enemy is often not the immediate threat, but rather your reaction to it. Panic knows only two responses: fight and flight, both of which can be deadly underwater. When trouble strikes, following the mantra %Stop-Breathe-Think-Act+can help control panic. For example, if you're suddenly caught in kelp, the first task is not to try to get loose, but to overcome that sudden rush of adrenaline and anxiety. Of course, there are emergencies when you have to act fast, and that's where it pays to have practiced your skills (buddy breathing, out-of-air ascents, etc.) But keeping a cool head in a hot situation is always job one.

### 5. Be Physically Fit

This can't be overstated. Diving is a physically demanding sport, both on the surface when muscling 50-plus pounds of gear on your back, and in the water kicking against currents and scaling boat ladders. If you're out of shape, during the course of a typical dive your muscles will tire, you will easily get winded, and your heart rate will escalate - and this is when everything is peachy. The more physically fit you are, the more comfortable you are, the more relaxed you are, and the more fun you're going to have. Swimming, jogging, power walking and shedding those extra pounds will make you a better diver - and one day may just save your life.

John Brumm is *Sport Diver Asia Pacific's* Gear Editor.

Published; <http://www.sportdiver.com/keywords/diving-courses/gear-practice-training-key-to-successful-self-rescue?src=SOC&dom=fb>

## Build A Save-A-Dive Kit

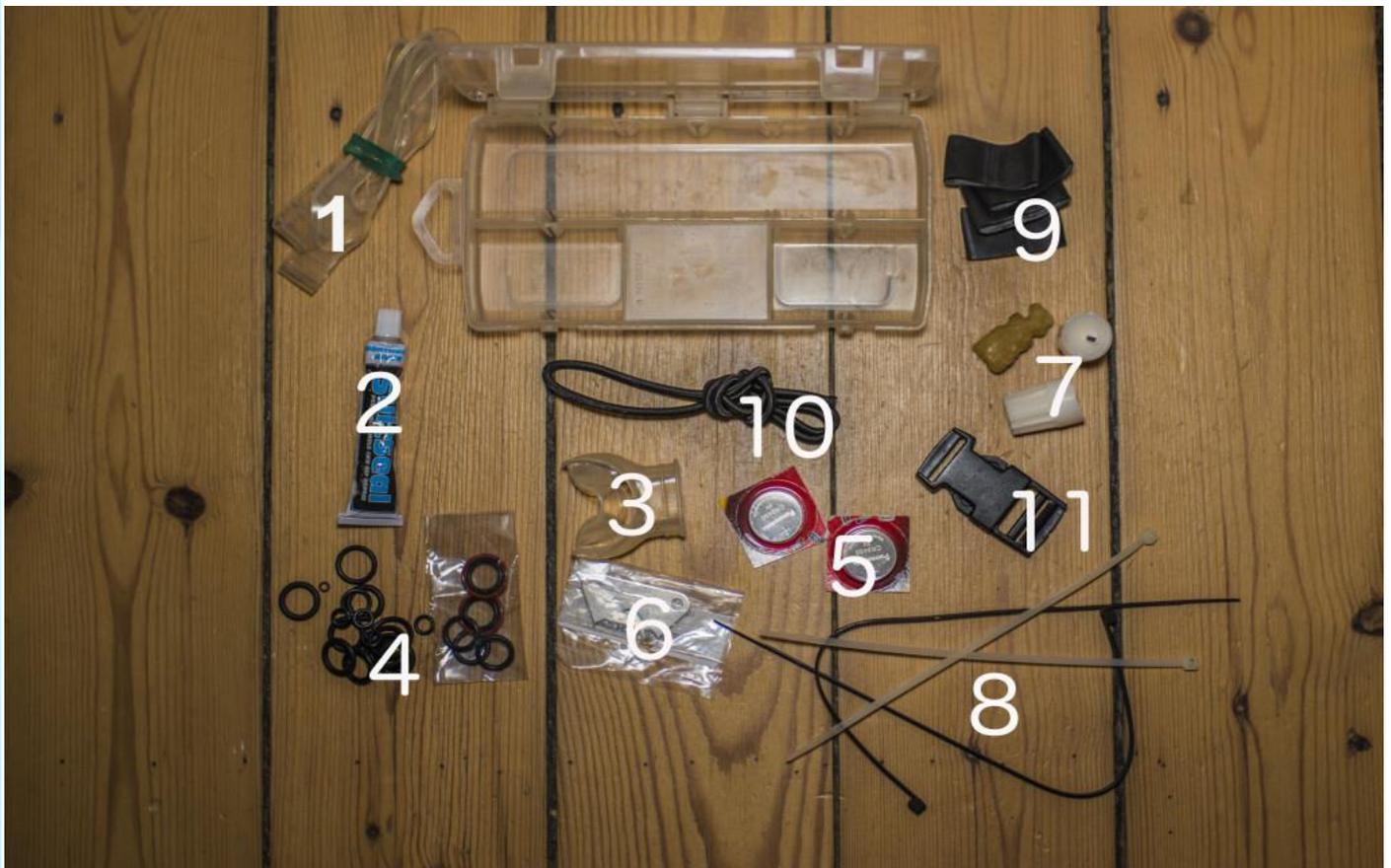
By Thomas Gronfeldt

For many divers who have just started diving in their own gear, the idea of things breaking may seem far-fetched. But once you've had to cancel – or at least opt out of – a dive or an entire dive day because your mask strap snaps, you begin to appreciate the idea that keeping a small set of spares can make a huge difference.

## Build A Save-A-Dive Kit – Cont.

As long as you're on dive trips arranged by dive shops, and renting their gear, spare parts aren't much of a concern. Most dive shops will have plenty of spares on hand to help you if stuff breaks. But once you start diving independently, with your own gear, you need to be your own backup. And even if you never need anything in your kit, you may be able to save a buddy's dive. Trust me when I say there's no better way to gain instant friends than by handing them the spare part they need for the dive they've been yearning to do all year.

The exact contents of a Save-A-Dive kit aren't universal, as what you carry should reflect the gear you carry and the diving you do. Nonetheless, some things will be in most, if not all, kits. Below, I'll walk you through my own kit for to help inspire yours.



### Save-A-Dive Kit

#### 1. Mask strap

Mask straps are made of a fairly thin strip of rubber, and as it deteriorates, the chance that it could break is very real. Ideally you should have an extra mask in your kit and bring it on your dive in case the strap breaks mid-dive or you lose your mask. I use a neoprene strap on my masks, which is much less likely to break, but still carry a replacement strap, just in case.

## Build A Save-A-Dive Kit – Cont.

### 2. Sealant for wetsuit and drysuits

With a bit of extra neoprene you can make rudimentary repairs using a sealant. And if your drysuit cuff comes loose, this can seal it up again.

### 3. Spare mouthpiece for regulator

Over time, these will wear down. You may suddenly you find yourself chewing through yours; so keeping a spare is smart.

### 4. An assortment of O-rings

Tons of stuff uses O-rings, and while carrying the standard size is most important, if you're trained to change the other O-rings on your gear, carry spares of these, too.

### 5. Spare battery for your dive computer

Even with a modern computer's low-battery warning, an extra battery or two can still make or break a dive day. Carry a spare of whatever battery or batteries your computer takes.

### 6. Tool to change the battery, if needed

### 7. Beeswax and/or candle stubs

Both of these are good for keeping zippers on wetsuits or drysuits running smoothly, or to unstick them if they get stuck.

### 8. Zip ties

These are universally useful, but in particular for attaching your mouthpiece (see above) to your reg if you need to replace it.

### 9. Pieces of bicycle inner tubing

I use these to secure the things I clip to my D-rings, but sometimes, they too break. Replacing them on my rig (I carry a wing and back-plate setup) is a bit cumbersome, but it means I don't need to do several dives with my spare torch dangling from a D-ring.

### 10. Bungee cord

I use this to attach things to my rig and sometimes my person, such as securing my compass to my arm.

### 11. Spare clip

I don't have these clips on much of my gear, but still carry one just in case.

### 12. Fin straps

Fin straps suffer the same risk of breaking as a mask strap, so carrying a set of replacements is very useful. (Note: I use spring straps on my fins, so there aren't any in my kit).

This kit represents half of my backup-equipment plan; I also carry a small diver's tool kit with basic wrenches, Allen keys, etc. Combined, these two kits have saved many a dive, both mine and my new best friends.'

Published: <http://scubadiverlife.com/2015/02/20/build-save-dive-kit/>

## 7 Tips For Putting on Your Wetsuit

By Andrew Jenkins



Raise your hand if you've ever struggled putting on a wetsuit. When you try to slide the neoprene over your skin, it sticks and bunches, destroying any dive excitement you may have felt, little by little. Forget trying to put on a damp wetsuit, and never mind if you're hot and sweaty.

Well, there's good news. Putting on a wetsuit doesn't have to be daunting.

After reading the tips below, you will know how to easily get your wetsuit on without breaking your fingers or looking like two pigs fighting under a blanket. Here are 7 tips to make it easier to put on a wetsuit.

### Put some Lycra on first

Wear a dive skin under your wetsuit or try scuba socks. The socks have the added benefit of keeping your booties or fins from rubbing and causing blisters.

### Customize your suit

Install ankle zippers to make getting in and out of your wetsuit easier. Have your dive shop measure you, and splurge on a custom-fitted suit. This is great if you don't have an out-of-the-box body shape.

### Upgrade your wetsuit

Have you seen the lined wetsuits that have a low-friction lining? This helps the wetsuit slide on. Some wetsuit companies mix spandex into their neoprene. An extra stretchy suit is easier to get on than a ridged one.

### Try the plastic bag technique

Put a plastic bag over your foot before you put it in the leg hole of your wetsuit. Once your foot is through, repeat with the other leg. Do the same with your hands and arms. Just don't forget to keep your plastic out of the water and recycle it when you're finished.

### Use water as a lubricant to help get your suit on

If it's not too cold, jump in and put your suit on. Water from a shower or hose can put water in your suit, making it easier to slide into your suit. This has an added advantage as a way to cool off if it's hot outside.

### Have your buddy help

Make use of your partner and have him/her pull up the back while you pull up the front.

### Make sure your wetsuit fits properly

Not only will this keep you warmer, but it's really hard to put on a wetsuit that's too small. [Locate your local dive shop](#) and have a professional help you find the right size. What did we miss? Do you have a technique that helps with donning your wetsuit?

## Upcoming AUE Activities

- *AUE Panama City Beach Dive & Navy Hard Hat Tour September 10 thru 13, 2015 - Details: Contact Quinal Johnson via email at [quinalj@gmail.com](mailto:quinalj@gmail.com)*
- *AUE General Meeting - Saturday 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. September 19, 2015 - **Tour of wound care/bariatric unit which has 5 to 7 chambers** Emory Midtown-Crawford/Long Hospital, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Davis Fisher bldg. 550 Peachtree St NE, Atlanta GA 30308*
- *DWP Coral Restoration Session 3 - October 17 thru 20, 2015 - Contact: Ken Stewart (615) 730-4906 Email: [kenkye62@gmail.com](mailto:kenkye62@gmail.com)*
- *AUE General Meeting - Saturday 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. October 17, 2015 Meeting Details TBA*
- *25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary NABS Summit Ka'anapali Beach Hotel Maui, Hawaii- November 7<sup>th</sup> thru 14<sup>th</sup> - See Registration Info: <http://www.nabsdivers.org/images/SummitRegistration2015.pdf>*

## Recent AUE Activities

- *AUE Club General - July 18, 2015*
- *DWP Coral Restoration Session 2 - July 27 thru 29, 2015*
- *AUE, DWP, & SSQ Empowerment Dive July 12 -13, 2015, Pelham, AL*
- *DIVERSe Orlando - Dive at Blue Heron Bridge (AUE, Atlantic Ranger, & SSQ - June 20, 2015*

## Announcements

### DWP Program Honored:

*Diving with a Purpose (DWP) is a program that creates trained volunteer marine advocates to assist in the stewardship of heritage assets in National Parks and National Marine Sanctuaries, and introduces young people to maritime-linked careers, was honored by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) today with the Chairman's Award for Achievement in Historic Preservation.*

*(See original press release at web link below)*

*[https://attachment.fsbx.com/file\\_download.php?id=1001792589852109&eid=ASuXsOuxLAW8b3T9KkDEe-luLcG6RJ8WbOepCK83l3Tm7rcgqzhrnSN6DvT2GzRsj\\_l&inline=1&ext=1436754213&hash=ASvfmZ3koyYg5vU](https://attachment.fsbx.com/file_download.php?id=1001792589852109&eid=ASuXsOuxLAW8b3T9KkDEe-luLcG6RJ8WbOepCK83l3Tm7rcgqzhrnSN6DvT2GzRsj_l&inline=1&ext=1436754213&hash=ASvfmZ3koyYg5vU)*



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## Editor's Corner

### Fellow AUE Members:

Welcome to the September 15, 2015 edition of *AUE Bubbles* newsletter. We hope you continue to find future editions informative. Your suggestions, comments and story ideas are always welcomed.

We also hope you continue to find value from future editions. Your suggestions, comments and story ideas are welcomed.

Completed story submissions must be received one week prior to the publishing date (Bi-monthly on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month).

The next edition will be published November 15, 2015.

Please submit your story ideas and comments to my attention via email.

Dive safely,

Alex Adams,

*Publisher & Editor*

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