

SPPR 1832

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

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Snorkeling

Introduction

- **Snorkeling** (also spelled **snorkelling**) is the practice of swimming at the surface of water.



What will you need?

- For snorkeling in warmer waters, the essential equipment consists of:
 - Fins - to propel us through the water efficiently
 - Mask - to help us see clearly when our eyes are immersed in water
 - Snorkel - so that we can continue to breathe comfortably when our face is in the water.

What will you need?

- **Comfort**
 - The equipment is usually made of rubber and plastics compounds and should be sufficiently supple to fit well without any discomfort.
 - Sometimes we may spend many happy hours snorkelling, so it is important to make sure that everything fits well.
- **Quality**
 - Safe snorkelling requires quality equipment made for snorkelling or diving, so ensure that it is intended for the use you intend to put it to. Avoid low quality equipment that may have an attractive price but may fall down on comfort and effectiveness.
- **Protection**
 - If you are on holiday in a warm country, then the first step is to protect yourself from strong sun while snorkelling. Sunscreen creams may wash off in the water while snorkelling so it is wise to wear a T-shirt to protect the most sensitive areas.
 - If you stay in longer, or are in cooler water, then some form of thermal protection will be needed. This can take the form of a lycra or neoprene suit which, while keeping you warm, can also protect you from other matters such as abrasion or stings.

Equipments

- Masks

- 2 types (dual or twins)
- Tempered / normal glass (to protect our eyes whilst ensuring a scratch resistant window to our underwater world)
- Types of material ranging from plastic to rubber to silicone

- Snorkel

- The snorkel is designed to allow us to breathe at the surface without lifting our head
- It comprises a tube, usually of plastic, and a mouthpiece of plastic, rubber or silicone.



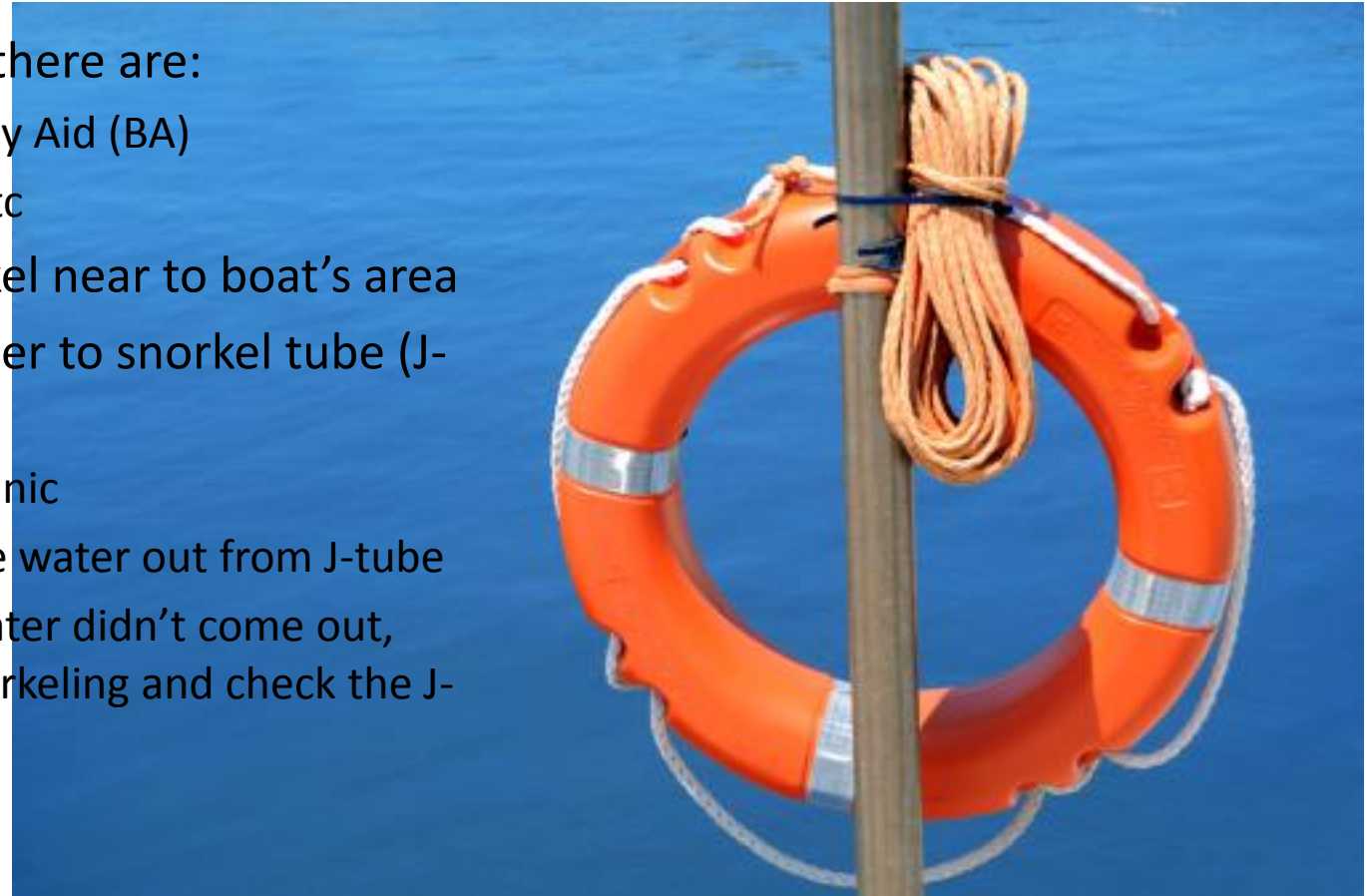
Equipments

- Fins
 - There are two main types of fin, shoe fin and open heel fin
 - Both types of fin are constructed of similar materials, rubber foot pockets and plastic blades.
 - The open heel fin however is larger, heavier and more robustly constructed, being designed to accept a dry or wet boot and to be used in open water.



Safety

- Make sure there are:
 - Buoyancy Aid (BA)
 - Ropes etc
- Don't snorkel near to boat's area
- If water enter to snorkel tube (J-tube)
 - Don't panic
 - Blow the water out from J-tube
 - If the water didn't come out, stop snorkeling and check the J-tube.



How to start?

- While snorkelling is not a complicated activity there are a few things that will help to make it more enjoyable and safer for you. You will be able to enjoy your snorkelling more if you know:

- What to look for
- Where to look for it
- What to wear
- What your limits are
- What could go wrong
- What to do in an emergency
- How to help others



Enter the water from the shore

- **STEP 1:** Walk to the waterline with your snorkeling gear in hand.
- **STEP 2:** Stop at a depth of approximately 3 feet with your defogged mask already on your head.
- **STEP 3:** Float in the shallow, calm part of the water as you put on your fins.
- **STEP 4:** Wait for a lull in the set ' if there are waves ' and then begin kicking out on your stomach.
- **STEP 5:** Extend your hands in front of you, ready to hold your mask in case you must dive under a wave.
- **STEP 6:** Check to see that your buddy is with you before swimming off to your snorkeling site.

Prevent Snorkel Mask from Fogging

- **STEP 1:** Rinse your mask with salt water or fresh water.
- **STEP 2:** Drain the water from inside the mask.
- **STEP 3:** Spit into the inside of your mask in the center of each viewing window.
- **STEP 4:** Spread the spit vigorously throughout the window using your middle and index fingertips. Rub side to side or in a circular motion and cover the entire window area.
- **STEP 5:** Rinse your mask thoroughly.
- **STEP 6:** Slick your hair back and put your mask on - immediately after rinsing and just prior to entering the water.
- **STEP 7:** Flush out the mask and remove any debris with fresh water after use.
- **STEP 8:** Store the mask at room temperature in a dry place, away from direct sunlight.

Snorkeling Tips

- Do not touch the animals. Even a gentle caress can disturb the mucous coating that helps protect fish from disease. Do not feed the fish. If fed by humans, after a while they become dependent on handouts and lose the ability to forage. Also, they lose their natural wariness, which makes them easy prey for poachers. Even though harvesting fish for tropical collectors is illegal in the national parks, it still goes on.
- Do not touch the coral. The tiny jelly-like polyps that live inside the hard calcium casing are fragile. One swipe of the hand can kill hundreds of them. Many popular shallow reefs have been decimated by careless swimmers who stand on them when they get tired. Swim gently and avoid kicking up a lot of sand when near a reef. The sediment can eventually smother the coral and block vital sunlight.

Snorkeling Tips

- Wear a liberal coating of waterproof sunscreen on your back and the backs of your legs. The thin film of water over you acts as a magnifier and because the water keeps your skin cool, you may not realize your skin is burning until it is too late. People who are especially sun-sensitive should wear a covering.
- Keep an eye out for stinging organisms like jellyfish and fire coral.
- Do not reach into holes or crevices in the reef. They could turn out to be the lair of a moray eel.
- Take off your jewelry. While barracuda attacks are almost unheard of, the toothy fish do seem to be attracted to shiny objects.

Snorkeling Tips

- Shark spotting are rare on the shallow reefs that snorkelers frequent, but if you see a shark, do not panic. Most reef sharks are passive types, not man eaters, and they usually ignore swimmers. If one acts aggressively or pays undue attention to you, calmly and slowly leave the water.
 - Do not walk in shallow water near the reef; sea urchin spines can cause nasty puncture wounds to the bottom of your feet.
 - Shuffle your feet across the bottom as you wade through the shallow sandy areas on your way to and from the reef. Stingrays lying on the bottom will swim off if you bump into them but sometimes sting when they are stepped on.
- Be aware of currents. Unless you plan to do a "drift dive" where you start in one spot and let the current carry you to an exit point, it's usually best to swim into the current first and then let it carry you back at the end of your dive when you are most tired.