**Ten Snorkelling Tips**

Snorkelling gives travellers the best of all worlds: The chance to see brilliant and vibrant seascapes without the expense and special training that scuba diving requires. In fact, many of our snorkelling guides no longer strap on their air tanks and descend deep below the surface in scuba gear, because there’s so much to see just below the surface

If you’re considering one of WWF’s highly sought-after [snorkelling tours](http://worldwildlife.org/tour_categories/snorkeling-tours), the following tips are ideal to help beginners and advanced aficionados alike:

**10. Suiting up:** Most people think wetsuits are only for use in chilly water. But they serve multiple purposes: They’re great at warding off dangerous sunburns, they keep most of your skin shielded from stingy particles in the ocean and they provide buoyancy.

Shorty wetsuits are suitable for nearly all of WWF’s snorkelling tours. One important tip: Don’t forget to put sun block on the backs of your calves, which seems to be the No. 1 spot to burn when you’re snorkelling. (And choose a reef-friendly product.)

**9. Floating around:** If you aren’t a strong swimmer, don’t have the stamina to stay in the water for a long time or don’t plan to free dive, consider using a float vest (either one that goes around your waist or one that straps across your shoulders). They’re also very helpful in snorkelling spots where currents can be swift.

**8. Take the waters:** Most of WWF’s snorkelling trips take place near the equator or in other tropical destinations. That means the sun is strong and dehydration is common. Even if you’re immersed in water, its salt content will sap your skin of moisture. Make sure to hydrate with water, juice or other non-alcoholic beverages.

**7. Flood insurance:** If your mask floods with water while snorkelling, beginners can go above the surface to let the water out. An effective advanced technique, however, doesn’t require that you surface.

Merely hold the top centre portion of the mask’s faceplate tight to your face—use the back of your hand to hold it steady. Then blow air out of your mouth. The air should force the water out of the looser bottom portion of your mask.

**6. Keep your distance:** Give marine life space and don’t approach too closely. Even if an animal approaches you—maintain a safe distance, and do not touch them.

This especially applies to corals. Some are toxic and can cause nasty cuts or even massive infections—not to mention that even an unintended kick to a coral head can damage decades’ worth of growth. During some of our snorkelling outings, the water over reefs is so shallow that you cannot even wear fins—follow your guide’s instructions when visiting these spots.

**5. Test swim:** Everyone should test out a new snorkel before going on a trip, but no one more so than a snorkeler with a prescription mask. It is common for small holes or tears to be created when a snorkel mask is being fitted with specialty lenses. Be sure to test it out with time to get it fixed if needed.

**4. Cranium care:** Wearing a swim cap or bandana around your head not only keeps hair out of your snorkel but also helps to keep your scalp from burning on a sunny day. An especially good style of bandana to wear is the one that surgeons don in the operating room—the ties prevent them from slipping off. Pick one up from a medical supply company for cheap.

**3. Steamy moments:** Like the inside of a car during a winter day, a snorkelling masks fogs up because you are generating heat. Prior to hopping in the water, wet the inside of your mask and dump out the water. Then spit into the mask and rub the saliva around before washing it out. This will prevent some degree of fogginess.

Special anti-fog gels are available on the market that work rather well; be sure to choose one that’s non-toxic, biodegradable and alcohol free, for your protection and for the safety of the reefs and their inhabitants.

**2. Dive into it:** Diving underwater and descending 10 to 30 feet is an advanced snorkelling technique that can add tremendously to the experience. Not only do you get a closer look at things below the sea, but you’ll also get yourself into a better position to snap photographs of supersized coral tables or take a closer look at a sea fan.

Diving while snorkelling requires that you learn to force your ears to “pop” to equalize pressure and swim below the surface more comfortable. You also need to practice expelling water from your snorkel by forcing a strong burst of air through the tube as you clear the water’s surface. Special “purge snorkels” are available on the market for those who want an extra line of protection against getting water in your mouth.

**1. Don’t be touchy:** Resist the temptation to pocket a pretty souvenir shell or seemingly dead sea star—it’s not ecologically sound, and [it could even be illegal](http://worldwildlife.org/threats/illegal-wildlife-trade).