

TRIMMING OUT

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By now he was quite successful at quickly slipping into his suit. The suit was new and therefore not really flexible, but with mom's stockings and the trick with the plastic bag, he did it well.

The first time he went into the water, he could feel the cold water flowing into his suit. Oops, was it leaking? Did he put the suit on the right way? Did he forget to close a zipper? Where were the leaks?

Fred watched the chills run over Skubba's body.

"There are no leaks!" he exclaimed as if he could read Skubba's mind. "It is normal that there is water in your suit. That little bit of water will warm up with your body heat and then it will keep you warm."

Soon after Fred's explanation, the chilly feeling was gone. Skubba felt no cold water anymore. It works! His suit was not leaking. Great.

To test his suit, he decided to swim a little. Jumping in was easy, but swimming was difficult. It felt like he was not deep enough in the water. As if he was floating. His kicks went up in the air. After a short, tiring swim, he decided to put his mask on and felt ready for the real stuff. Diving.

When he tried to put his head in the water, he felt his legs coming up. As he pushed his legs down, his head came up. Weird?!?

Maybe he should adopt a more active style? But even when he moved his arms and legs like a madman, he did not get any deeper into the water! What now? A high jump?

He crawled back to the edge and went to the fishing platform, or whatever you call

a wooden platform built by a fisherman to be closer to the water. Because he knew that this was built above a deep part of water, he jumped in head first. Yes, he dove underwater. But suddenly, it felt like there was an invisible hand pulling him up. He was soon floating back on the water's surface.

"I cannot stay under with my suit on," Skubba exclaimed. "The suit protects me from the cold, but I cannot dive with it Fred!"

"Of course not. You have forgotten all about Archimedes!" answered Fred.

"Archimedes? The one with the floating cup?"

Fred asked Skubba to give him the suit. He took it and threw it in the water. It floated.

"You see," said Fred, "the bubbles in your suit keep you warm, but it also makes you float. We have to make it sink."



Then he took the lead blocks and asked Skubba to lay them one by one on his floating suit. He called this activity, 'trimming out'. Skubba thought it sounded better as, 'putting lead on' because you put lead 'on' the suit, but Fred was a man of difficult words.

After 4 blocks, the suit began to sink. "We have to fix four extra blocks to trim you out. Those extra blocks will push your suit down when you're diving so that you can stay under. A bit like our bucket." Fred explained.

With a rope around the hip and the shoulders, Fred made a kind of belt for holding the blocks. A weight belt.

Suit, mask and weight belt. Check. Skubba was back in the water. Ready to dive...