

REAL FINS

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Skubba had nicely developed his way of swimming underwater in his homemade fins, and could now swim with the fish.

When his mother asked him and Fred to accompany her to the dive shop, they proudly showed their set of fins off to the owner of the store. With a smile on his face, he told them the story of his first pair of fins. Their eyes sparkled when he told them that his homemade fins were nowhere near as good as the ones that he now held in his hands. According to him, they were well made and probably the best that could be tinkered together.

There were of course better fins in his shop, but these were made in large factories with special, expensive and complex machines, and not with materials found in daddy's garden shed. Their design was the result of years of study by a team of engineers. And don't forget, perfected after months of testing in special laboratories. But even so, he would have to do his best to find a type of fin that was better than the one made by Skubba and Fred. Might they be interested in designing and selling diving equipment when they are grown up?

Before they could answer, the owner had disappeared. After a while, he came back with a pair of yellow fins. Fred noticed that the rear end of the fins were open. Skubba's feet would be exposed at the back and the fins would fall off.

"This is an open water fin," explained the shop owner. You use these kinds of fins with booties. When you go dive in open water..."

"What's open water?" asked Fred.

"Uh, open water, uh, water without a roof above it. A lake, a pond, the sea... You understand, not a pool."

"Ah yes, I understand."

"Well, a diver in open water wears a neoprene suit and booties to protect himself against the cold."

"Yes, water can be cold sometimes," agreed Skubba already holding a fin in his hands.

"Because a diver wears booties, the feet are bigger. Therefore, the back of these fins are open. There is a strap to put around your heel and tighten it."

Skubba was already fiddling with the strap. By doing this, he discovered how to tighten and loosen it. When he wanted to try the fin on, the owner stopped him.

"What is your shoe size?" he asked. "You need the dive boots first to put the fins on."

He gave Skubba a pair in his size and said it could be a bit tricky to put them on. It would be easier with a zipper, but that kind of dive boot gets broken faster. You can also use old nylon stockings to slip into the booties. Skubba knew exactly where he could find those...

Skubba waddled proudly showing off his new diving equipment and the man from the store asked Fred if he also wanted a pair of fins.

"No, thank you," replied Fred briefly.

Then the shop owner turned to Skubba's mom and asked how she wanted to pay for the items.

