

# Take the plunge

We put swimming goggles to the test

For regular swimmers, an effective pair of goggles is an often elusive must-have accessory. When splashing around in the pool or sea on holiday, or at home, well-fitted goggles can protect your eyes from harmful water-borne pollution, burning chlorine and UV rays. They can also help improve your body position in the water and aid underwater orientation.

However, reader Sue Bell summed up the frustrations of many of you when she said, 'Goggles are the bane of my and my fellow swimmers' lives. We have invested large amounts of money, time and effort trying to discover the perfect goggles that do not leak or mist up, are comfortable and do not give us panda eyes for the rest of the day.'

## What we did

When it comes to choosing a pair of goggles, the key is to match the shape of your facial features to the goggles' design. We conducted user trials on 10 of the UK's best-selling pairs of unisex, adult, non-prescription leisure goggles.

Each pair of goggles was rated for comfort, ease of adjustment and fitting, and levels of leakage, fogging, vision and slippage. More than 60 testers took part in our trials, swimming a total of just over 157 miles in the process.

A huge thank you to Barnet Cophthall Swimming Club in North London, as well as all of our readers who got involved.



**BEST BUY**



### AQUASPHERE KAIMAN

★★★★★ £10.99

**Best for:** Leisure swimmers who want wide vision, rather than the focused vision favoured by racing swimmers.

As the top performing goggles in our trial, the Kaiman scored higher than any other for comfort and distortion-free vision. The large scratch-resistant lenses didn't leak or fog up much, the head strap didn't slip and the soft rubber on the eye-cup was an advantage because it moulded to fit different face shapes. More than half of our testers said they would buy these goggles.

**One tester said** 'Excellent goggles, fantastic fit, brilliant vision – I'll buy a pair no doubt.'

**Cheapest retailer** [www.swimmingwithoutstress.co.uk](http://www.swimmingwithoutstress.co.uk)



**BEST BUY**



### SPEEDO MARINER

★★★★★ £7

**Best for:** Those with a thin nose bridge.

One of only two goggles in our tests with an adjustable nose bridge, the Mariner scored best on levels of front and peripheral vision and strap comfort. However, the nose bridge's sharp corners dug into the skin of our testers, whether adjusted to the widest or narrowest setting. Two thirds of our testers rated their performance as 'good' and said that they would buy them.

**One tester said** 'They left very little marking around the eyes which was wonderful – I worry about such things!'

**Cheapest retailer** [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)



### SPEEDO BIOFUSE

★★★★ £12

**Best for:** Swimmers who don't mind rings around their eyes at the end of a swim.

Speedo's newest goggles combine a stiff lens to avoid distortion with a soft seal mould for a comfortable fit. Our testers reported that the head strap was a little tricky to adjust, but they didn't slip or leak much at all, and were fairly comfortable.

**One tester said** 'Loosening the strap on these goggles didn't affect performance.'

**Cheapest retailer** [www.jdsports.co.uk](http://www.jdsports.co.uk)



### SPEEDO FUTURA ICE PLUS

★★★★ £9.65

**Best for:** Those who need goggles with a wide nose bridge.

Opinions were divided among our testers – some found the soft plastic frame comfortable, some complained of headaches as a result of their wide fit. The instructions for strap adjustment are unclear, but once altered, they don't slip.

**One tester said** 'I have a thin narrow face and experienced quite a lot of leaking.'

**Cheapest retailer** [www.allenswimwear.co.uk](http://www.allenswimwear.co.uk)



### TYR TECHNOFLEX

★★★★ £12

**Best for:** Swimmers with narrow nose bridges and short eyelashes.

The split silicone head strap of these goggles allowed little slippage, and the amount of leaking and fogging was minimal. Several testers rated the head strap adjustment as 'a bit fiddly' and said their eyelashes flicked against the lenses.

**One tester said** 'The nose piece was too tight and wasn't adjustable.'

**Cheapest retailer** [www.thegogglebox.com](http://www.thegogglebox.com)



### WIN HYDROVISION

★★★★ £7.95

**Best for:** Those who like to tame their tresses mid swim – oddly a comb is included!

Half our testers thought these goggles leaked quite a lot, but they scored well on levels of vision, slippage, fogging and comfort. The instructions state that 'Correct adjustment of the bridge strap is essential' – strange for goggles with a single piece frame!

**One tester said** 'I was concerned that the head strap clips might come loose accidentally during a swim.'

**Cheapest retailer** [www.swimshop.co.uk](http://www.swimshop.co.uk)



### ZOGGS PHANTOM

★★★★ £7

**Best for:** Those with a small nose bridge.

A solid all-rounder, the Phantom scored well in all the main categories of our test. Some testers thought the deep lenses were bulky, and commented that the head strap adjustment was insecure. They were also aware of excess strap material flapping around while in the water.

**One tester said** 'The fixed nose piece did not allow the eye cup gaskets to seal either side of my large nose bridge.'

**Cheapest retailer** [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

## Anti-fog solutions

All goggles tested come with an anti-fog coating, but fogging will still occur because the air inside goggles is moist and warmer than the water outside. The water vapour inside condenses on the lens surface, creating a fog.

Some people swear by spitting or allowing a small amount of pool water into clean goggle cups before starting their laps, but this doesn't seem to work for everyone. An alternative option is to spray with a man-made anti-fog solution.

Mid swim, the best answer is to rinse with pool water and shake out the surplus. After use, rinse with fresh water and dry thoroughly, but never rub the inside of your lenses as you risk scratching them.



We also tested the Diana Cosmo, Maru Air II Anti-fog and Zoggs Predator Wiro goggles, which all received a two-star rating.

RIGHT Barnet Copthall Swimming Club were some of our willing and able testers

BELOW For reviews of the other goggles in our test, including the Zoggs Predator Wiro Frame (below), see [www.which.co.uk/holidaywhich](http://www.which.co.uk/holidaywhich)



**Always try goggles on before you buy – good retailers realise this is essential**

### Choosing a pair of goggles

The Amateur Swimming Association ([www.britishswimming.org](http://www.britishswimming.org)) advised us: 'Choosing the right pair of swimming goggles isn't rocket science, but there's a huge selection of goggles available, so it can be confusing.

'Look for a pair that are a similar shape to your eye sockets, be they round or oval. The right pair should sit comfortably around the eye-socket and not dig into the side of your nose.

'Always take goggles out of their packaging to try them on. All good retailers (including the online retailers we mention here) will allow this.

'To check the fit, ignore the strap, and squeeze the eye cups on, one at a time, with the palms of your hands. Let go and if the cups remain in place for a few seconds it's likely to be an even better fit with the strap adjusted. If it falls off, it's not suitable.

'Specialist sports shops or leisure centres have trained staff who may give expert advice on choosing the best pair for you.'

### Fitting your goggles correctly

To put goggles on, hold the lenses face down in both hands with the straps around the back of your hands. Hold the goggles up to your eyes, then pull the straps over the top of your head. Most goggles have two straps – the lower strap should be straight from your eye to the back of your head and the upper strap should be at a slight angle towards your crown.

Always read the instructions, particularly about emptying the goggles. To prevent injury when tipping excess water out, tilt rather than pull them away from your eyes, as they can easily slip out of wet hands and bang back into the eyes.

### MANUFACTURERS

[www.aquasphereuk.co.uk](http://www.aquasphereuk.co.uk)

[www.dianasport.it](http://www.dianasport.it)

[www.maruswimwear.co.uk](http://www.maruswimwear.co.uk)

[www.speedo.co.uk](http://www.speedo.co.uk)

[www.swimshop.co.uk](http://www.swimshop.co.uk)

(manufacturer for Win Hydrovision)

[www.tyr.com](http://www.tyr.com)

[www.zoggs.uk.com](http://www.zoggs.uk.com)

### did you know?

The forerunners of modern swimming goggles were reputed to have been made from tortoise shells polished until very thin, with a fine horizontal slit cut into each shell to create a 'lens'

### HOLIDAY WHICH? TIPS

- 1 Goggles are always ordered by their lens colour – so if you only see one colour at online stores, it is referring to the lens, not the frame or strap. The most common colours available are clear, blue and grey.
- 2 Clear lenses are best for use in swimming pools, though don't provide any anti-glare for outdoor swimming.
- 3 Some swimmers use lens cleaner after every swim to maximise the effectiveness and life span of their goggles.