

# Innovative BC for life

There are so many styles of buoyancy compensator on the market these days that the phrase 'spoilt for choice' is something of an understatement. We have jacket-style BCs, back-inflation-style BCs, wings and hybrids. They all, of course, do the job of providing buoyancy at the surface and buoyancy adjustment under the water, but in different ways.

Scubapro's new Hydros Pro has been heralded as a 'BC-4-Life' by its manufacturer. This jaunty phrase refers to how almost every component, from buckles and straps to pouches and weight systems, can be customised, or replaced if damaged.

The Hydros Pro is a back-inflation BC designed for a single cylinder. Its main components are constructed from an injection-moulded, thermoplastic elastomer known as Monprene. This material replaces the stitched fabric and webbing traditionally used in harnesses.

Strong, flexible and neutrally buoyant, it doesn't absorb water like webbing does, and this cuts drying time to a minimum. It has a distinctive clingy / rubbery feel to it and one of its advantages is that it stays firmly, but comfortably, in place when in use.

With many wings there can be a degree of shifting or movement, making a crotch strap necessary, but I was impressed to find no discernible slippage, helped by the use of Monprene in the backplate, either at the surface or during the dive.

The two-stage inflator allowed me to add as little or as much air as I needed and the jacket's tri-bungee system efficiently migrated air to where it was needed. Venting excess air was easy whatever my orientation, with a choice of four dumps: right shoulder; left shoulder via a tug

on the inflator; the inflator itself or the left-sided kidney dump.

The air cell is constructed so it is wider at the bottom than at the shoulders, which provided a nice upright position at the surface. I particularly liked the integrated weight system, which holds a total of eight kilograms in two pouches that slide effortlessly into their Monprene holders. I could operate the quick-release pinch clips single-handedly.

While the Hydros tips the scales at just under four kilos when configured with the

weight pockets, these are easily removed and this cuts the weight by a kilo, taking it well into travel wing territory.

For fine-tuning your buoyancy, a pair of trim-weight pouches are also located on the rear of the jacket. Four stainless-steel D-rings plus various attachment points allow paraphernalia such as a knife, reels, buoys and torches to be carried.

The four men's and three women's sizes provide between 160 and 180 Newtons of lift.

Neil Hope



## Scubapro Hydros Pro

**Company:** Scubapro

**Price:** £570

**Web:** [www.scubapro.com](http://www.scubapro.com)

### SCUBA says

It's easy to see why this innovative BC received a prestigious international Red Dot Award for product design. From its Monprene harness to the Tri-stage bungee system that controls gas within its buoyancy cell, the Hydros Pro oozes innovation and quality. Best of all, it's a pleasure to dive with.