

A Shrink Studies SCUBA



How Do Divers Equalize?

Usual Methods for Equalizing Pressure in Middle Ears when Diving

	Male (n=300)	Female (n=100)	Total*
Close Mouth, Pinch Nose & Blow	88%	87%	88%
Nothing	86%	85%	86%
Swallow, Yawn, or Thrust Jaw	59%	64%	61%
Very Slow Descent/Ascent	51%	76%	59%
Decongestant by Mouth	55%	63%	58%
Decongestant Spray or Drops	21%	35%	26%
Other - Not Listed	14%	15%	14%
Hum or Buzz	7%	6%	7%

The above data came from online surveys completed by 400 volunteer divers last year as part of a study of middle ear equalization among divers who had reported difficulty equalizing pressure in their middle ear and/or use of decongestants when diving. The most striking difference between male and female divers was the use of "Slow Descent/Ascent" with the males (51%) using that approach significantly less often than females (76%). Females were also more likely than males to use decongestant sprays or drops. The anatomical differences between the Eustachian tubes of adult males and females, which may account for the differences, will be discussed by an ENT specialist in a pending issue of *Scuba Diving* magazine. In the meantime, viva le difference. The accompanying chart shows these figures graphically.



Internet photo

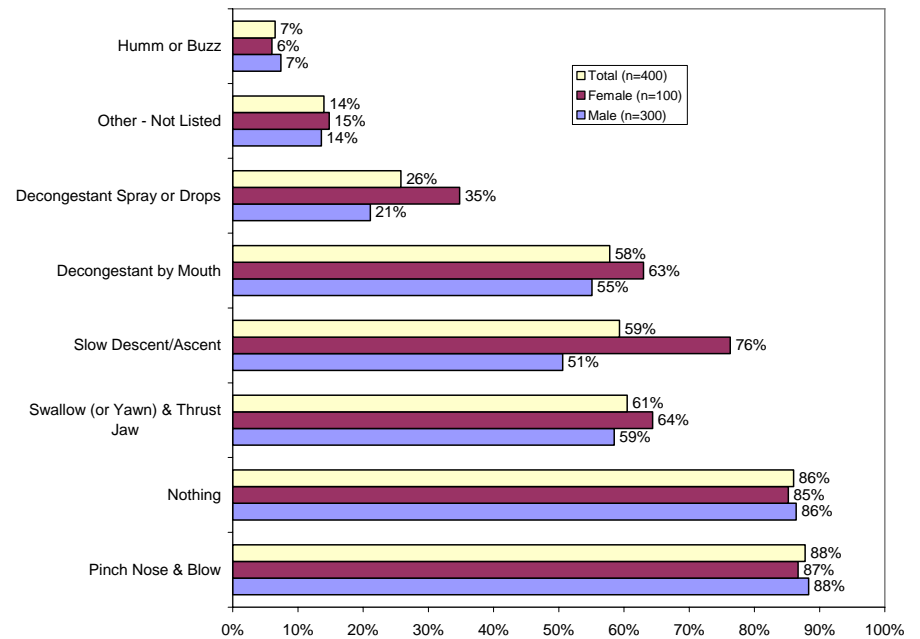
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*Percents total more than 100% because some divers use more than one method.



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Methods for Equalizing Pressure in the Middle Ear



Detailed Follow-up from last week.

Why Divers Cancel Dives (Based on 383 responses)

Cancelled dives or dive days because of injury or illness in 2003

Marine animal/life injury (bites-cuts-scrapes-stings)	0.3%	1
Food poisoning	0.5%	2
Headaches-Migraine	0.8%	3
Pregnancy	0.8%	3
Cuts/Lacerations-Stitches	1.3%	5
Medication Side Effects	1.6%	6
DCI-DCS symptoms	1.8%	7
Cuts/Lacerations-No Stitches	1.8%	7
Dental Pain	2.1%	8
Hangover	2.3%	9
Motion sickness	2.3%	9
Traveler's Diarrhea	2.9%	11
Broken Bone(s)	5.2%	20
Sinus Squeeze	6.5%	25
Back Pain	8.6%	33
Ear Squeeze (unable equalize middle ear)	10.2%	39
Recent Surgery	10.4%	40
Other - Not Listed	14.1%	54
Flu/Fever	16.4%	63
Ear/Sinus Infection	20.9%	80
Cold/URI	56.1%	215