



# WILD SWIM KIT LIST

## FOR A DIP IN COLD WATERS

This is a guest post by one of my best pals Jojo O'Brien, from [Wild Beings - Adventure Wellness](#), who is basically a mermaid and knows all there is to know about wild swimming...as I most certainly do not!

You actually don't need much kit at all to go wild swimming (dipping). However, having the following kit can make the difference between a lovely experience verses feeling very cold and finding it seriously hard to warm up, to the point where it can be dangerous.

E = Essential S = Safety A = Additional

O = Own G = Gathered P = Packed

ITEM	E	S	A	MY ADVICE	O	G	P	NOTES
Swim Costume / Bikini	✓			Without pointing out the obvious!				
Wetsuit Gloves			✓	Whilst not essential, they do help take away the cold bite, and allow you to have better use of your digits post swim (especially when it comes to using keys).				
Wetsuit Booties		✓		As well as keeping your feet a little warmer, they double up as protection for wading into the water avoiding sharp shells and broken glass etc. Go for above the ankle ones; they look like socks.				
Beanie		✓		Dipping with a beanie on is quite comforting and maintains a bit of body heat. But if you choose to dunk your head, it is definitely advisable to have a beanie for post dip to trap some heat for your walk home. Wind on wet hair is not pleasant nor advisable.				
Towel / Robey	✓			While a standard towel is fine, a robe is great because you can whack it on over your head straight away and get undressed and dry without bearing all! Failing that a dressing gown is also very practical, if you are happy to ignore a few weird looks!				
Bucket / Dry Bag / Ikea Shopping Bag			✓	It is quite handy to have one of these for popping all your wet stuff in post swim.				
Dry Robe Or Equivalent			✓	While expensive, these long "coats" are worth the investment if you are to become an avid "winter dipper". They trap heat like nothing else and offer a serious amount of wind protection. They are waterproof for those rainy dips, and therefore can also double up as a wonderful storm proof dog walking coat!				

ITEM	E	S	A	MY ADVICE	O	G	P	NOTES
Whistle		✓		To attract attention if you get into trouble.				
First Aid Kit		✓		A small first aid kit for any cuts or stings.				
Warm Layers	✓			Loose cosy comforting layers for after, including a vest, long sleeved merino top, jumper/fleece and down inner jacket. Leggings aren't that easy to put on post dip so perhaps opt for something looser such as jeans, cords or track suit trousers.				
Gloves	✓			Woolly gloves for after are invaluable.				
Socks	✓			Thick warm woolly socks.				
Shoes	✓			Boots, crocs, whatever is your preference! UGGS really come into their own here, previously a hater of the brand, I now love them. They are warm and cosy and dry your feet impeccably well (coming from someone with Raynauds). They are also quick drying for dips the following day.				
Hot Drink			✓	Having a warm soothing drink warms your cockles nicely after.				
Hot Water Bottle			✓	Optional; but some swimmers like to hold one after. I have also seen a few people pour warm water over themselves before getting changed.				
Moisturiser			✓	The cold water against your face can play havoc with your skin in winter months, so moisturise before and after, with SPF.				

If you want to take your dipping to the next level and start swimming longer distances then the following will be useful to make the transition.

ITEM	E	S	A	MY ADVICE	O	G	P	NOTES
A Swimming Wetsuit	✓			A standard water-sports wetsuit is adequate but a swimming one (Orca, Zone 3, 2XU, Huub ...) has more flexibility and is designed specifically for swimming. (They are quite fragile though, so be careful with it!)				
Lube			✓	Vaseline or glide lathered on behind the neck can be great for preventing chaffing at the neckline, which is often worse in salt water and over longer distances.				
Goggles	✓			shop around for ones that do not leak and fit your face.				
Swim Hat	✓			Good for keeping the head warm, as well as being easy to spot (yellow and pink are considered the best colours). Some people wear two for extra warmth, or neoprene ones, but standard swimming pool ones are sufficient.				
Ear Plugs			✓	Beneficial if you suffer from ear problems, also a good idea if you swim in cold water to prevent "swimmers/surfers ear".				
Neoprene socks			✓	Different to booties, these are thinner (1-2mm), are tight fitting and protect your tootsies and keep them warm, while being a bit more suitable for swimming than heavier booties.				
Tow Float		✓		100% worth the investment - A device which will make you stand out, and also provide flotation if you panic or suffer from dizziness (not unusual when open water swimming in waves). You can get ones that simply blow up with an easy to operate mouth piece, or even rucksacks which blow up and you tow the same way.				