

# The Spearfisherman Frogman Suits

In 1945, Arthur Brown, who had invented The Spearfisherman Swim Fin, was manufacturing his fins at a shop on Garfield Avenue in Huntington Beach, California. When the US Navy asked him to design a rubber suit, he “made a mould of a man, dipped it in liquid rubber, and then cooked it in steam. (...) It was heavy but used by a number of surfers so they could surf year round” (Higgins, n.d.).

On page 10 of the first, December 1951, issue of *The Skin Diver*, The Spearfisherman Company announced the mass production of “seamless, one-piece, pure gum rubber, nude freedom frogman suits” after three years of experimentation. The original advertisement is reproduced below.

In 1955, The Spearfisherman all-weather Frogman suit was priced at \$34.85 (Carrier & Carrier, 1955, p 273). Arthur Brown eventually sold his Spearfisherman Company to Swimaster.

## Historical Diving Suits

# 1

### FROGMAN SUITS

- ... Seamless
- ... One Piece
- ... Exterior,  
Pure Gum Rubber
- ... Nude Freedom



We are now starting to mass produce this suit, perfected after three years of experiments. Order early for rotation delivery. Special introductory offer.



Direct Factory Address:  
Box 338, Huntington Beach, Calif.

A 1951 *Skin Diver* advertisement

## Donning and doffing a Spearfisherman Shorty Suit

The Spearfisherman “shorty” suit below features a wide-mouthed chute, enabling the diver to don and doff it unassisted (Carrier & Carrier, 2005, pp. 120-123). The following illustrations show how the suit is put on and taken off.



**Picture 1** shows the first step in pulling on the hood. After the suit is drawn up in the manner of underwear and the arms put through the armholes, the wearer reaches back into the hood with both arms, as shown.



**Picture 2** shows the hood coming up over the head. After the back of the neck is in place and the hood is stretched up over the forehead, the diver looks up slightly in order to get his hair tucked back into the hood before the hood is dropped down into place.



**Picture 3** shows the method of sealing off the front or back entry closures on suits of this type.

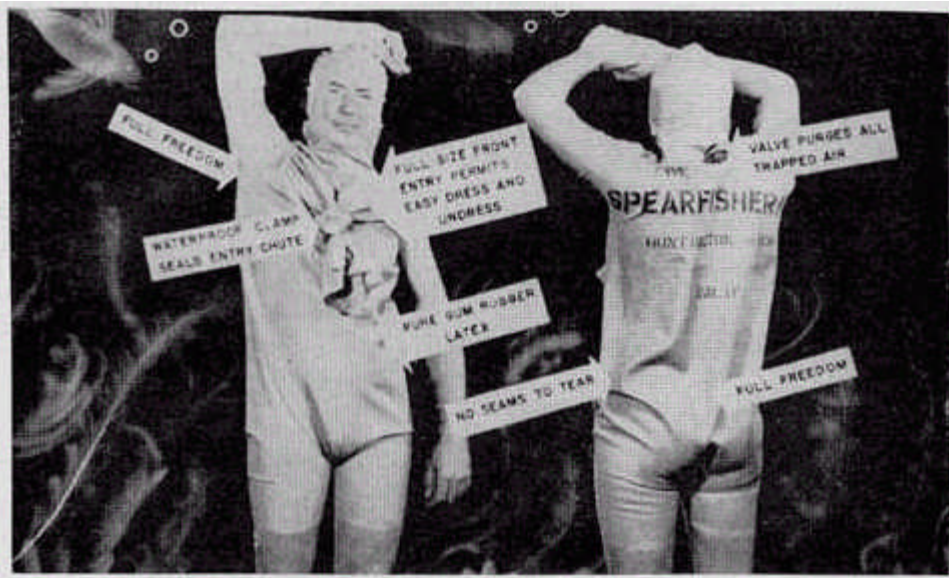


The method of doffing the suit shown in the photographs is exactly the reverse of the procedure followed in putting it on, except that at the end it is necessary to pull the suit off the bicep (**Picture 4**).

## References

1. Rick & Barbara Carrier (1955) *The Complete Book of Skin Diving*, New York: Wilfred Funk.
2. Delbert G. Higgins (n.d.) *An Early History of Surfing in Huntington Beach (Written in the mid-1960s)*, <http://molasar.blackmagic.com/ses/surf/papers/OldHIB/BudHiggins.html>
3. Scuba America Historical Center (n.d.) *The original skin diver*, <http://www.divinghistory.com/first-sdm.htm>
4. Skin Diving History (2006) *Early Mfg. & Retailers - Spearfisherman*, [http://www.skindivinghistory.com/mfg\\_retailers/s/Spearfisherman/index.html](http://www.skindivinghistory.com/mfg_retailers/s/Spearfisherman/index.html)





**The selling points of the original Spearfisherman Shortie Suit**

The original \$20 shortie suit (above) boasted full freedom of movement; an entry chute sealed with a waterproof clamp; easy access and undress via a full-size front entry chute; pure gum rubber latex construction; and a valve on the nape of the neck to purge all trapped air.

**NOW! It's here**  
 After 5 Long Years In Development  
**The Latex Seamless Shortie**  
 (Made like a surgeon's glove)

The SPEARFISHERMAN, since 1944 developers of more firsts than all other swim-goods factories combined, brings you the greatest of all—the 800% stretchable, pure rubber, one piece shortie. This is the tough, light weight, easy to use suit featuring the new "ASCOT PLEATED" neck chute. No more bulky entry chutes. With the "Ascot Pleated," the suit pops right into place — and the freedom — say — IT'S JUST LIKE WARMING THE WATER.



This rugged shortie is a practical suit—no knees or elbows to tear out—no seam trouble—easy to dry—easy to pack—easy to get into, 100% dry, the 800% stretch rubber makes a gentle bicep and thigh seal. One size fits everybody. Outlasts two ordinary suits, still light in weight.

TEN-DAY RETURN PRIVILEGE—YOU MUST BE SATISFIED  
 —POSTAGE PAID—ONE DAY SERVICE  
 SEND CHECK TODAY, \$24.95 plus tax TO

**FREE**  
 INTRODUCTORY OFFER  
 FOR A LIMITED  
 TIME ONLY  
**DUCK FEET**

(The Navy U.O.T. Fin)  
 "SENIOR REGULARS"—Value \$8.95  
 Absolutely free with each cash suit order.  
 "GIANTS"—Value \$12.95. Add \$4.00  
 With each cash suit order. State shoe size.

**Spearfisherman**  
 7521 CLAY ST.  
 HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA

**The new "Ascot pleated" Shortie**

New Spearfisherman shorties (above) and full suits (right) featured an "Ascot pleated" neck chute to allow faster dressing. The former was also rebranded as a "Kellys 7 Seas" (below).

Available Now . . . !  
**The SPEARFISHERMAN**  
**FULL LENGTH**  
 Seamless - Pure Gum Rubber  
**SKIN DIVING SUIT**



"The first machine-made skin diving suit in the world."

The Spearfisherman Full Suit includes all the outstanding features that has made the Seamless Shortie such a hit.

- No seams to rip, tear or crack!
- Large (pleated) neck entry chute!
- Made of Pure Gum Latex Rubber, tough, rugged, lightweight!
- 800% stretchability — made like a surgeon's glove!
- Easy to get into!
- Outlasts two ordinary suits!

★ This is a one-piece full suit — full length — including HOOD, Full Length ARMS, and Full Length LEGS.

The perfect suit for cold water or deep water diving.

The revolutionary Machine Method of fabricating this full length suit guarantees a perfect seal fit, no rough edges, 100% waterproof — selling at a price every diver can afford . . .

|                  |                              |         |
|------------------|------------------------------|---------|
| <b>FULL SUIT</b> | Full length legs with feet — |         |
|                  | full length arms .....       | \$54.95 |
| <b>FULL SUIT</b> | Full length legs with feet — |         |
|                  | bicep seal short arms .....  | \$39.95 |
| <b>SHORTIE</b>   | Thigh seal short legs —      |         |
|                  | bicep seal short arms .....  | \$24.95 |

Two Sizes: Large and Small.  
 Send your measurements with order.

**DEALERS:** This is a hot item.  
 Please Inquire!

**SPEARFISHERMAN**  
 7521 CLAY STREET  
 HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA

**The Spearfisherman Full Suit**  
 Bicep seal short arm and full length arm versions were available

**DIVERS! SAVE \$15.20 on this famous "7 Seas" Suit**



Never before such comfort, freedom and warmth . . . never before such incredible value! KELLYS famed "7 SEAS" short suit is seamless LATEX, laboratory and ocean tested for more than three years. One-piece construction too, which means snug, water-tite fit, wonderful wearing qualities. No elbows, knees or seams to leak. Pop in or out of the "7 SEAS" latex short suit in less than 40 seconds! One universal size fits everybody because "7 SEAS" latex rubber is 800% stretchable, 8 times more elastic than usual rubber skin diving suits. Now save more than 40% on this regular **1975** \$34.95 short suit.

Hundreds of other skin diving values!  
 Write for free illustrated catalog today.

**Kellys** MARINE DIVING SUPPLY DIVISION

DISTRIBUTORS OF UNDERWATER DIVING EQUIPMENT - MARINE SUPPLIES  
 TELEGRAPH AT TWENTY-FIFTH OAKLAND 12, CALIFORNIA

**Spearfisherman Shortie**  
 rebranded as Kellys "7 Seas" Suit

- All suits were one-piece and came in two sizes: small and large.
- Shorties came with bicep and thigh seals as standard. The former was a full suit option.
- The pure gum rubber latex suit material was seamless, durable, lightweight and highly elastic (800% stretchable).
- Thanks to their large pleated neck chutes, suits could be donned and doffed in seconds.
- As machine-made garments, the suits sealed and fitted well, had a smooth finish and were guaranteed waterproof.
- A major factor in suit pricing was affordability.