

# Secrets from the Pro

## How to choose your Dive Computer ✓



The dive computer is the second most important purchase of scuba equipment you'll ever make, especially when ranking your budget and purchases by cost factor. While computers have always been, relatively expensive to extremely expensive, their innovation curve has started to flatten out. In particular, when considering the common needs of the recreational diver, the vast majority of computers on the market today, have all the requisite functions.

### The absolute list of basic functions that you should look for are:

Normal watch functions	Logbook w/ complete data	Dive planning function	User changeable settings i.e. conservative factor
Dive alarms, such as depth, time, deco limit	Readable display with backlight function	Ease of use, according to style of diving	Nitrox capable
User changeable settings i.e. Fresh v. Salt water	Battery power indicator	Graphical display for NDL and O2 exposure	Ascent alarm

### The extra bells and whistles: Desirable functions to consider, depending on type of diving you do

Freediving capable	Bottom timer	Downloadable logbook	Upgradeable firmware
Rechargeable battery	User changeable settings i.e. surface interval	Multigas switching up to 100% Oxygen	Altitude adjustment
User changeable battery	User changeable settings i.e. Algorithm choice	User changeable settings i.e. Residual nitrogen reset	Decompression planning
Software upgrade function	Digital compass	User changeable setting i.e. Data display is customisable	Air integration / Wireless tank pressure transmitter

If the computer you're considering does not have the complete list of basic functions, then you need to move up to the next level of computer. Buying any computer that has less will not grow with you, as your diving activity expands and you become a more skilled and competent diver.

On the other hand, buying a computer that has more 'bells and whistles', will likely be a waste of money, if you see your long term diving life staying within recreational limits. It's only when the diver is going to extend their dives past the recreational limits that these extra functions now become beneficial.

Dirty Secret #1 - Always dive with an analog pressure gauge on your regulator set. Don't trust transmitters to not fail, because they do. And when a transmitter fails, it could result in an emergency, due to running out of gas.

Dirty Secret #2 - Never buy a computer that's not been on the market for less than 18 months. Often issues in the technology, or software, are still being worked out, as problems are discovered 'out in the real world'.

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If your diving objective is anything beyond recreational, tropical water conditions, then you need to have an in-depth conversation with an advanced instructor. One who has extensive experience in the conditions, or type of diving, you're wishing to participate in.