

Underwater photography is one of the most thrilling yet challenging genres a photographer can pursue. It demands not only technical skill and creative vision but also physical endurance and meticulous care of specialized gear like **underwater camera housings**. Many newcomers and even some veterans overlook the critical importance of rest, often viewing downtime as laziness rather than a vital part of their process.

In this post, I'll explain why rest is essential in underwater photography — not just for your health and energy but also for protecting your equipment, improving your shots, and ensuring long-term success in this demanding field. From proper saltwater removal to careful handling of buttons, dials, hinges, and electrical connections, I'll cover best practices and habits that can save you from costly mistakes and disappointment.

Buoyancy and Composition Demands Require Mental and Physical Energy

Underwater photography is not like snapping a quick divephotoguide.com shot on land where a moment's attention can suffice. It involves maintaining neutral buoyancy, managing your floatation device, interpreting light through layers of water, and composing your shot amid moving marine life. Doing all this while holding a heavy underwater camera housing is physically demanding and mentally taxing.

Buoyancy and composition demands mean you have to be fully present and focused. Fatigue not only reduces your ability to hold steady but also dulls your creative judgment. The difference between a blurry, poorly composed image and a stunning, perfectly exposed shot often boils down to how rested and alert you are.

Fatigue Increases Mistakes That Can Damage Your Equipment

Let's be honest: underwater camera housings are complex pieces of equipment. They have numerous buttons, dials, hinges, and *delicate electrical connections* designed to operate your camera in harsh environments. Fatigue increases the chance of pressing the wrong button, mishandling a dial, or forgetting critical maintenance tasks that protect this expensive gear.

One common but costly mistake is neglecting proper saltwater removal before opening housings. Salt residue inside your housing can corrode electrical contacts and mechanical components if not flushed away properly. When you're tired, you're more likely to skip or rush these crucial post-dive steps.



Saltwater Removal Before Opening Your Housing: A Critical Step

After surfacing, the underwater camera housing is covered in saltwater, which is highly corrosive. Opening your housing underwater or in a damp environment invites salt crystals inside the camera chamber, potentially ruining cameras, strobes, or accessories.

- **Flush with Fresh Water:** Always rinse your housing with fresh water to remove salt, sand, and grime before opening it.
- **Use Focused Tools:** A tiny flashlight is a great tool to inspect o-rings and seals for salt deposits after rinsing.
- **Rest Before Opening:** Take a deliberate break after your dive to handle your gear carefully, ensuring no rush mistakes.

This process not only extends the life of your equipment but also reduces the chances of **corrosion that starts from undetected salt residues** around buttons, dials, and electrical contacts.

Safe Handling in Shared Rinse Tanks to Prevent Damage

Many dive operations provide shared rinse tanks for photographers to clean their housings post-dive. While convenient, they can be a source of stress and damage if not used responsibly.

I get annoyed when I see housings banging together, buttons scraping dials, or o-ring grooves caked with grit from careless handling. Here are some tips for safe handling that help keep your and others' gear safe:

1. **Label Your Gear:** Use masking tape to label chargers, cables, and housings, so nothing gets confused or lost.
2. **Separate Your Equipment:** Keep your housing away from others to avoid accidental contact that leads to dents or scratches.
3. **Handle with Care:** Avoid dropping or banging your housing; hinges and buttons are susceptible to damage from impacts.

Safe handling means physical rest and calmness while maintaining your equipment, which leads to better longevity and less stressful dives.

Dry Workspace Habits to Avoid Corrosion

Once you've flushed out the saltwater, the next critical step is proper drying and storage. This often overlooked step protects the mechanical hinges, buttons, and electrical contacts of your housing from rust and corrosion caused by residual moisture.

- **Dedicated Dry Space:** Maintain a clean, dry workspace for opening and maintaining your housing.
- **Use Desiccants and Cloths:** Use moisture-absorbing packets and microfiber cloths to dry exposed parts carefully.
- **Inspect O-rings and Seals:** Inspect all sealing points for damage or moisture to avoid leaks.

Taking your time in a calm, rested state ensures you don't miss moisture spots hidden in hinges or under buttons — areas prone to corrosion if neglected.

Two-Device Backups and Verification: Secure Your Images to Avoid Disaster

One of my personal pet peeves is editing images for hours before making a second verified backup. Always remember the old underwater photography adage: *never format your memory cards on day one without a verified backup*.

Carrying two devices or card readers to create separate backups immediately after the dive is critical to avoid losing your precious shots due to card failure, data corruption, or accidental formatting.

Backup Step Description Tip Primary Backup Copy images from memory card to your main storage device (laptop or portable drive). Verify copied files by spot-checking thumbnails and file sizes. Secondary Backup Make a second copy on a different device or cloud storage. Label backup devices clearly with masking tape to avoid confusion. Verification Before deleting or formatting cards, confirm backups are complete and accessible. Use checksum or file comparison software for an extra layer of security.

Rest Increases the Quality of Your Next Day's Shooting

Finally, rest isn't just about gear maintenance — it's about renewing your mental and physical state. When you're well-rested:

- Your buoyancy control improves, allowing smoother, more stable shots.
- Your eyes stay sharp, enhancing composition and spotting marine life.
- You reduce errors like mispressing buttons or forgetting to check seals.
- You enjoy the experience more, reducing stress and fatigue-related mistakes.

After years of underwater photo trips, I've learned that the day you skip rest is the day your housing floods, or your best shot gets blurred. Treat rest as an integral part of your diving and photography routine, not a luxury or an excuse to be lazy.



Conclusion

Underwater photography demands more than just technical skill and creativity — it requires strategic rest and careful handling of your equipment. Proper saltwater removal, gentle treatment of buttons, dials, and hinges, diligent drying, and consistent backups all benefit significantly from a rested, attentive photographer.

Remember, **fatigue leads to mistakes**, both in how you handle your gear and how you shoot. By incorporating rest and responsible habits into your routine, you'll not only protect your underwater camera housing and extend its life but also produce consistently better images and enjoy the entire experience more.

So next time you feel like skipping that break or rushing through rinsing, think twice. Taking rest seriously is a mark of a professional underwater photographer — it's not laziness, it's smart diving.