

WELL AND TRULY TESTED



A knife and a hood – this month it's the accessories that come under NIGEL WADE's gimlet eye, and in the case of a dive-reel, he even has a go at refining it!

REEL MGE TEC 100



I'VE BEEN BUMPING MY GUMS ABOUT the need for divers to carry and use rightly coloured delayed surface marker buoys on all open-water dives; in fact it's becoming something of a crusade. I believe this is the most effective gear for being located quickly at the surface.

However, I've played only lip-service to the other pieces in the jigsaw, those that aid efficient stowage and deployment. For that we need a spool or reel full of line, plus a

method of attachment.

After trying out various types of reel and attachment methods, I settled on a simple plastic model that ticked all the boxes, and have stuck with it for my own use for 12 years. This blue-and-yellow MGE ratchet-reel has never let me down.

The original MGE reels are robust, efficient and fit for every purpose except one – deep technical diving.

This has now been addressed with the latest all-black MGE Tec 100 model. However, like its siblings it needs a little work to make it into the perfect tool for the job, so, in the best *Blue Peter* tradition, have your scissors ready.

The Design

The all-black MGE Tec 100 reel is loaded with 100m of fluorescent yellow 1.4mm diameter polyester line with a 40kg breaking strain. The reel body and line-spool is made from durable plastics, with stainless-steel components for the axle, line-guide and release trigger.

The Tec 100's design is a mirror of MGE's



The components needed for the "Blue Peter" DIY project.



A figure-of-eight stopknot.



The completed project.

original reel models (if it isn't broken, why bother to fix it?) with a simple lock-on, lock-off ambidextrous line-release trigger, and also features a chunky winding handle. The reel is self-lubricating under water.

Improving the Design

You'll need some 5mm-diameter shock-cord (bungee), a stainless-steel split ring and a standard piston-clip, plus those scissors and a cigarette-lighter to make this reel into the perfect tool for DSMB stowage and deployment.

Cut a 90cm length of the shock-cord and tie a small overhand loop in the middle. Thread the ends through the two holes either side of the reel-handle and, after tensioning the cord to ascertain the correct length, tie a figure-of-eight knot at each of the ends to lock it in position.

Trim the excess with the scissors and burn the tips with the lighter-flame to stop them fraying. Attach the split-ring and piston-clip to the reel-handle using either of the holes, and the job's done.

The DSMB can be rolled up, attached to the line clip and laid over the top of the line-spool. The shockcord is then pulled over the buoy and rests neatly under the spool to hold everything in place.

The small loop aids in releasing the buoy prior to deployment. The piston-clip can be used to attach the whole package to a suitably positioned D-ring on your BC and, *voila*, we're good to go.

In Use

The new MGE Tec 100 reel behaved exactly the same as my tried, tested and much-loved older models. It was easy to grip with either hand, and the trigger mechanism was smooth and easy to operate, with the T-bar nestling nicely between my middle and index fingers even

The MGE Tec 100 reel with rolled DSMB stowed and ready to go.



when wearing thick neoprene gloves.

The line-guard, positioned centrally, kept the line from spilling off the edge of the spool, as it has with some other reels I've tried.

The winding-handle was chunky enough to be gripped firmly, and the diameter of the spool the perfect size for fast, resistance-free restowing of the line on ascent.

The supplied plastic spring-clip attached securely to the webbing strap on my DSMB. It looks up to the task, but I'd be inclined to go all belt-and-braces and tie the line directly to the buoy for total piece of mind.

The reel is virtually maintenance-free, needing only a dunk in the rinse-tank after

each dive to keep it in tip-top shape. If my old reels are any guide, it should give year after year of trouble-free service.

Conclusion

With the addition of the bungee-strap

and piston-clip, this reel proved perfect for the job in hand. The modifications aren't rocket

science – they're cheap as chips and easy to perform, which only leaves me wondering why MGE doesn't do this to each of its reels before they leave the factory.

Either way, once you've modified these reels there's nothing to dislike, they're lo-tec, robust, and work like a charm. With the Tec 100 reel the range now covers all the bases. ■

SPECS

- COST** » £52
- LINE** » 100m of yellow 1.4mm polyester
- COLOURS** » Black
- SIZE** » Body 19 x 15cm. Line spool, 6 x 11cm diameter
- WEIGHT** » 592g
- RACHET** » No, locks in both directions and free spool
- ORIENTATION** » Ambidextrous
- CONTACT** » www.cpspartnership.co.uk
- DIVER GUIDE** ★★★★★★☆☆



The MGE Tec 100 after the DSMB's been deployed.