

Float Tubing Good Practice Guidelines

South West Lakes Trust Venues for float tubing: Roadford, Stithians, Siblyback, Kennick, Fernworthy and Burrator



South West Lakes Trust RULES:

- We require anyone wishing to use a float tube to be a member of the BFTA (British Float Tube Association). Details can be found at www.bfta.org.uk. This is for insurance purposes and anyone wanting basic training can get this from the BFTA
- Your BFTA membership number must be written on your permit
- Anyone launching a float tube must be competent to do so
- You must wear a life jacket at all times and the jacket must be CE approved
- Your float tube must have been dried and any debris removed so invasive species cannot be transferred
- Two float tubers may launch at any of the above sites using the buddy system (where you watch out for each other's safety) but you must speak to staff from the site by calling them beforehand.
- You may only float tube on your own at these venues if another fishing boat agrees to be your 'buddy' and look out for you or if safety cover is on the water at the sites with watersports centres (excludes Kennick, Fernworthy and Burrator). You must speak to staff on site beforehand
- There is no fee to launch a float tube as long as a valid day permit or season permit has been purchased
- It might be possible that a member of staff will provide safety cover but this has to be agreed in advance.
- Float tubes pose more of a risk to the user than our own rowing boats, which we maintain and inspect regularly... therefore users cannot sign a waiver and go out alone as you may have seen boats doing.
- Any angler launching on our venues agrees to abide by the above rules and below guidance from the BFTA
- You MUST observe any no go fishing areas at each lake – these are displayed in permit rooms or please ask a member of staff

Advice and Good practice from the BFTA (British Float Tube Association)

THE TUBE:

Before inflating your tube, ensure that the bladder(s) are correctly positioned and that the valve is seated properly. Ensure no pinching or folding of the bladder whilst it is being inflated.

Inflate slowly to a pressure that is sufficient to fill the outer-casing so that the tube feels firm but not hard when depressed with your hand.

DO NOT Leave a fully inflated tube in your car during hot weather, or in direct sunlight. (Air expands with heat and could burst the bladders).

Ensure all essential items are attached to the tube - landing net, priest, leader snips Scissors, etc. Pin on zingers should be attached to pockets away from the main bladder, a clip-on or magnetic variety is preferable to use.

THE ANGLER:

ALWAYS WEAR A LIFE JACKET. No matter how well you can swim it is very difficult to get out of a deflated tube when you have up to two rods and a bass bag full of fish around your ankles. A manual pneumatic lifejacket is the preferred choice of most tubers, auto inflatable are o.k. but remember if they get wet they will inflate. A good quality CE approved lifejacket costs less than £100 and a re-arming cylinder around £15. You will not be allowed on the water with the BFTA if you are not wearing a life jacket.

Ensure your flippers are attached to you with fin-saver straps as they do not float and they can easily get left in the bank-side mud getting in or out of the water.

Carry a whistle with you at all times, if you are in difficulties you can attract the attention of other water users.

Neoprene waders are the preferred choice of most tubers in the winter months as they are warm and provide extra buoyancy. However, many members now use breathable waders all year round and invest in good quality thin thermal underwear for the colder weather.

Please observe weather conditions before launching as high winds can soon get you into difficulty. Know your limitations because paddling on large waters can be very exhausting.

LAUNCHING:

U-Tubes and Vee tubes - put the tube on to the water, and then arrange your fishing kit on the tube. Enter the water backwards with your fins strapped on and with the tube behind you, if you trip or lose your footing you will fall into the tube saving you a premature ducking. Move out slowly pushing the tube along with you until the water is just above your knees, it is then o.k. to sit down into the tube and fasten the crotch strap if fitted, and stripping apron on the tube.

Doughnut Tubes - Put the tube down at the waters edge, step into the tube with your fins on, ensure the seat strap is buckled correctly and pull the tube up by the carrying handles to just below your waist and then slowly enter the water backwards being careful with your footing. When the water is just about knee level gently sit down.

The best launch sites are gently sloping banks or slipways and if you launch into the wind it makes landing a little easier at the end of your fishing session.

FISHING:

Paddling - A steady action is preferable similar to back pedalling on a bicycle.

Long casts are not necessary, prolonged false casting increases the chance of hooking your tube. If you do hook your tube DO NOT pull the leader, but cut it off and then remove it after you leave the water.

Any hook up below the water that you cannot see, again cut the leader, then remove it after you leave the water.

Play your fish out and then slowly bring the fish to your net. Do not lean forward or lunge to land your fish.

RETURNING TO SHORE / STOWING YOUR TUBE:

Paddle into the bank-side, organise your fishing kit so that everything is to hand then stand up and leave the water backwards. Never try to walk forwards in flippers as the water resistance will trip you over.

Remove all accessories and deflate your tube, Partial deflation is o.k. but it is important to relieve the pressure from the seams of the outer casing.

Store hanging up in a dry area away from direct sunlight.

It is a good idea to remove and inspect the bladder periodically to check for damage/deterioration and to check for any debris trapped between the bladder and outer casing.

These guidelines are common sense, and should be applied to ensure you have a safe and enjoyable experience with your float tube fishing.

BFTA members are on the water most weekends, the BFTA website/forum will give you an indication of where other tubers will be fishing. If you are a beginner to tubing and would like help or advice, please feel free to contact us and we will be only too pleased to help.

www.bfta.org.uk