

# NEOPRENE GLOVES

## H2OPEN

H2Open is the only magazine in the world dedicated to open water swimming. Whether you're training for your first one-mile challenge, aspiring to tackle the English Channel or simply looking for a great wild swimming spot, we've got it covered. Published bi-monthly, each issue is packed with training tips, nutrition advice and gear reviews. **Click here to visit [h2openmagazine.com](http://h2openmagazine.com) for more information and subscription offers.**

## Wendy Roberts tests the best six for warmth and flexibility while winter swimming

**I**n cold water, it is often your often extremities that freeze first. With neoprene gloves you can avoid the dreaded 'claw' and stay comfortable in the water for longer. Whether you swim in a wetsuit or without, they are a great bit of kit to extend your swimming season. We asked H2Open reader Wendy Roberts to check out a few of the best gloves on the market today.

### WHAT TO LOOK FOR

#### Thickness

The thickness of the neoprene of the gloves on test varied between 2mm and 4mm. Basically, the thicker the neoprene, the warmer your hands will be – but at the expense of flexibility. If you are a cold water swimmer choose gloves with thick neoprene to keep your fingers toasty.

#### Flexibility

If you want to swim longer distances in your gloves, flexibility is key. Thick neoprene can affect your stroke by removing any feel of the water, so choose one of the sleeker-styled gloves.

#### Fit

No matter how technical the fabric, your hands will get cold if your gloves let in water because they are too big. Remember, neoprene stretches: your gloves should be a snug fit.

### The test

Wendy tested all the gloves with a 30-minute swim in the Cromarty Firth in water of approximately 9 degrees C. She rated each glove out of five for warmth and flexibility.

### Meet the tester

Wendy Roberts began open water swimming with a Great North Swim and is now on her third season of swimming throughout the year. She is lucky to live in the Scottish Highlands where she swims in local lochs in the summer and in the Cromarty and Moray Firth in the winter. She regularly swims with the Wild Highlanders, a group of swimmers with a huge range of styles and abilities, but with one thing in common: a love of swimming in the open air.



### C-Skins Wired 2mm Gloves

**£26.99** [c-skins.com](http://c-skins.com)

C-Skins is a cold water surf company, so these are gloves designed for surfers rather than specifically for swimmers. Wendy tried the 2mm gloves, but they also come in 3mm and 5mm versions. The gloves feature liquid inner seams (a liquid rubber seam coating to add strength) combined with glued and bindstitched outer seams to keep the water out. The gloves are made out of the company's 'Ultra Stretch' neoprene, which they say is durable and carries minimal water. The gloves are very grippy – which may be useful when surfing but is less of a consideration when swimming.

**Wendy says:** "I swam for 20 minutes before my hands felt cold. A sleek-styled glove with a snug wrist. Good feel of the water."

**Warmth: 4**

**Flexibility: 5**

**Verdict:** An excellent glove that combines warmth and flexibility.



### Huub Neoprene Swim Gloves

**£29.99** [huubdesign.com](http://huubdesign.com)

We reviewed the Huub Archimedes wetsuit in our October/November 2014 issue, so were looking forward to trying out their swimming gloves. Specifically designed to keep your hands warm during cold water swims, the gloves are made from the same high-grade neoprene as Huub wetsuits.

**Wendy says:** "These gloves have a generous fit, so maybe go a size smaller than usual. They do not have glued seams, so after a while the water seeps through into the glove – my hands eventually got a little cold. The wrist seal, however, was snug. The design of the gloves allowed for some feel for the water."

**Warmth: 4**

**Flexibility: 4**

**Verdict:** A good all-rounder.



### BlueSeventy Thermal Swim Gloves

**£35** [blueseventy.co.uk](http://blueseventy.co.uk)

Unlike the C-Skins, these gloves from outdoor swimming brand BlueSeventy are specifically designed for swimming. Previous versions of this popular glove featured webbing between the fingers for resistance training; this has now been dropped, giving a more natural feel of the water. The gloves feature a 'metal cell liner' (a thin layer of silver neoprene) that BlueSeventy says stops water absorption and maximises warmth. The gloves have a longer cuff to stop water seeping in.

**Wendy says:** "These gloves didn't keep my hands warm at all. However, they gave a good feel for the water and would be suitable for swimming longer distances when the water is not too cold. I liked the sleek style and snug wrist."

**Warmth: 2**

**Flexibility: 5**

**Verdict:** An ideal spring and autumn glove for when the water is warmer.



### Gul Flexor Glove 4mm

**£30** [gul.com](http://gul.com)

Another glove designed primarily for surfing rather than swimming, the Flexor is also available in a 2mm version. The gloves have glued and bindstitched liquid seams for strength and waterproofing. According to Gul, the gloves' 'Bolt Dry' technology wicks water away from the skin for increased insulation and warmth. Like the C-Skins, these gloves have more grip than the other gloves on test.

**Wendy says:** "A rubber grip covers the palm of these gloves, which make it difficult to manipulate and feel anything, although the grip softens when warmed so may suit warmer water. They need to be worn with long sleeves so as to make a seal. The sizing is also on the generous side."

**Warmth: 3**

**Flexibility: 3**

**Verdict:** The most expensive gloves on test are perhaps more suitable for surfing than swimming.



### Lomo Swimming and Triathlon Gloves

**£17** [ewetsuits.com](http://ewetsuits.com)

These 3mm neoprene gloves from watersports company Lomo are the cheapest of the gloves we tested. Designed specifically for open water swimming, they also feature glued and bindstitched liquid seams. The short cuff has a gasket seal that fits the glove tightly to the wrist. Although the Lomo gloves are more bulky in design than some of the other gloves on test, they scored highest for warmth of all the gloves we tried.

**Wendy says:** "Excellent for warmth but a little bulky, although I managed a good fit following some adjustments. All seams are glued with a very good wrist seal, so will suit swimmers without wetsuits. Some feel for the water. Buy smaller than recommended for best results."

**Warmth: 5**

**Flexibility: 4**

**Verdict:** The best value gloves on test. Perfect for winter swimmers venturing out in very cold water.



### Zone3 Neoprene Swim Gloves

**£25** [racezone3.com](http://racezone3.com)

Zone3 is a leading triathlon brand and their gloves are perhaps best suited to wetsuit wearers. The gloves have very long wrists designed to be tucked under or over wetsuit sleeves, so no bare flesh is showing, and also feature a velcro strap to stop the gloves slipping off the hands.

**Wendy says:** "A generous fit so water soon flooded into the glove. Probably best to go a size smaller. Although the gloves became waterlogged they did not get heavy. The very long wrist is suited to wearing over a wetsuit sleeve. I not sure if the velcro is needed as well, but it did help to get the glove off."

**Warmth: 3**

**Flexibility: 4**

**Verdict:** A flexible glove especially designed to be worn with a wetsuit.

