

METALSUB TORCHES

Metalsub may be a relatively new name on the UK diving scene, but this Dutch manufacturer has built up a solid reputation in other countries for producing top-end, durable torches made from anodized, marine-grade aluminium. They must be good – they are used around the world by the military, fire departments and police agencies for search and rescue and special operations.

Metalsub XL7.2 dive torch

The XL7.2 is Metalsub's entry-level torch, but don't let this fool you into thinking it is a basic dive light. Oh no, this is the real deal – and so it should be at nearly £250. However, you do get a fantastically robust, well-made torch for your hard-earned dosh which is ideally suited to the hardcore British diver.

It looks the business in its black rubber and military-green anodised finish, and it sits nicely in a neoprene-gloved hand. The on-off controls are situated on the rear of the unit and are easy to operate even when wearing 5mm neoprene gloves in 6-8°C waters.

The XL7.2 comes with a 20-watt Xenophot bulb as standard, and this gives out a bright, penetrating beam that sliced through the murk at 36m in an inland site with ease. Using this bulb, you get a burn time of 70 minutes, but you can opt for a ten-watt version that gives 140 minutes, or a 15-watt LED which will last for around 90 minutes.

The rotating on-off control on the back of the torch has a locking mechanism, preventing accidental operation, and it has three variable power settings – half, three-quarter and full power. It can even be set to flash an SOS signal – ideal for when things have gone pear-shaped and you don't need to be turning the torch on and off to raise the alarm! The XL7.2 also comes with an LED on the rear of the unit which displays the battery capacity – green is 50-100 per cent, orange is 20-50 per cent, red is 10-20 per cent, and flashing red means the power has

fallen below 10 per cent. When the latter occurs, the power of the light drops down to 50 per cent automatically.

A neat feature is the fact that you don't have to crack any O-ring seals everytime you want to charge the torch – two external sockets hold the charging plugs, and full capacity is achieved after six hours.

