



Don't try this at home: Vanessa Dillon makes housework fun.

sport

How to iron under water

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It's hot and it's wet, but it's not steamy. At least not under the surface. Extreme Underwater Ironing is the latest sport, and Vanessa Dillon is the Australian champion.

The rules are simple. A scuba diver must take an "electricity-less" iron, an ironing board and some crumpled clothing below the surface and re-emerge with a photograph.

Dillon and her partner, Nathan Carey, opted to create a living-room setting with a touch of cross-dressing.

"We thought we'd go for the prop overload to make it look the least underwater that it could be," says Dillon, who took a chair, a beer bottle, a newspaper and a wicker clothes basket in addition to the requisite props.

"My partner dressed up in a dress, an apron and a long, blonde, curly wig, and it was up to me to be the man around the house."

Dillon, who admits to not owning an ironing board or having ironed for two months before her extreme ironing experience, says there were many challenges involved in executing the 17-metres-deep attempt at the championship.

"I had all the stuff in the washing basket while I was going down and it tipped. All the heavy things dropped and everything else floated.

"One of the volunteers helping out on the day was a Queensland policeman and a 1.5-kilogram weight just missed his head," says Dillon, who is relieved to have narrowly avoided a charge of assaulting an officer.

Other difficulties included assembling the ironing board at depth and keeping the props from floating away. "Sitting back in my armchair reading a newspaper and drinking a stubbie while I watched the drag queen do all the housework worked fine in theory until I realised that the newspaper hadn't made its way down," she says.

Neil Miller, co-ordinator of the extreme underwater ironing world record attempt, says those attempting the sport will need a dive certificate, a good imagination and a few crucial items:

- + An all-metal ironing board. "You don't want a wooden top because it will float."
- + A brightly coloured iron. "They stand out better for the photograph." A "bog standard old iron" simply will not do.
- + A black garment. "Black doesn't change colour under water. All the other colours turn a muddy brown any deeper than four to five metres."

Miller advises competitors to cut off the iron's electrical cord to minimise the chance of getting tangled at depth.

An attempt at the world record for the maximum number of simultaneous underwater ironers will be held at a wreck site 28 metres deep, near Palm Beach, on Good Friday.

"We hope to have 12 to 15 divers all ironing underwater at once," Miller says. He has contacted *Guinness World Records* to ask whether this attempt might make the official record. He is still waiting for a reply.

Visit www.diveoz.com.au for more info.