

## WORST-CASE SCENARIO®

# HOW TO ESCAPE FROM A GIANT OCTOPUS

### 1 Pull away quickly.

In many cases, a human can escape from the grasp of a small- to medium-sized octopus by just swimming away. Propel yourself forward to create a pulling pressure on the octopus's arms. If you cannot get away, or if you feel yourself being pulled back, continue to the next step.

### 2 Do not go limp.

Octopi are naturally curious and, if strong enough, will check to see if you are a food item before letting you go. Do not act passively, or you may be bitten or quickly enveloped by the octopus's web, a flexible sheath used to trap prey. Once you are caught in a "web-over," escape will be extremely difficult. However, octopi tire easily, so continue to put pressure on the arms by attempting to swim away. The octopus may decide to let you go rather than bring you in for a closer look.

### 3 Prevent the octopus's arms from wrapping around your arms.

Initially, the octopus will secure itself to a rock or coral formation and reach out to grab you with just one or two arms. Once it has a firm grip on you, it

will move you toward its mouth (called a “beak”) by transferring you to the next sucker up the arm. Do not allow the first two octopus arms to pin your own arms to your sides, or you will have little chance of fighting it off.

**4 Peel the suckers from your body.**

Using your hands, start at the tip of each octopus arm and remove each successive sucker from your body, like peeling up a bath mat. Once you have loosened one of the octopus’s arms, give it a spear, raft, surfboard, or other object to latch on to. Work quickly, before the suckers reattach to your body or the octopus’s other arms have a chance to grab you.

**5 Detach the octopus from its anchor.**

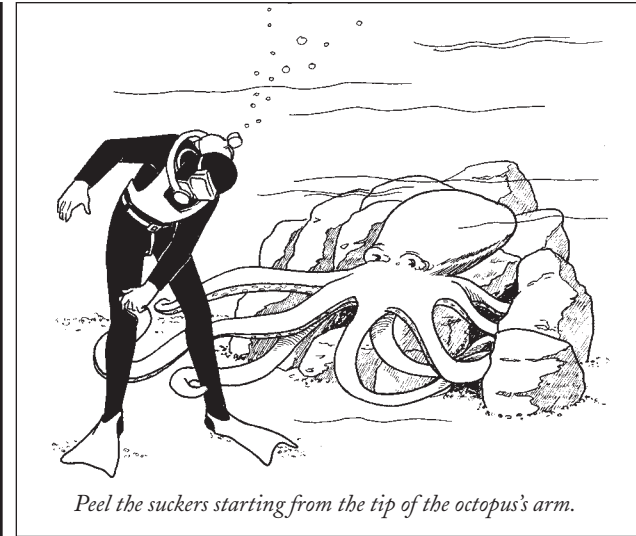
Using the sucker removal method described in step 4, separate the octopus from its anchor. Octopi prefer to be anchored to a fixed object, and may swim away once dislodged.

**6 Turn somersaults in the water.**

If you have detached the octopus from its mooring but are still being held, turn your body in circles in the water to irritate it into releasing you.

**7 Swim toward the surface.**

Octopi dislike air intensely and will release you once they break the surface. Continue to peel the octopus’s suckers from your body as you swim.



**Be Aware**

- A giant Pacific octopus may be well over 100 pounds, with an arm span of 23 feet.
- Giant octopi are extremely strong, but do not constrict prey to kill: They tear victims with their sharp beaks.
- Giant Pacific octopi are not poisonous, though bites may become infected.
- Octopi typically eat crabs and clams, though they may eat fish and birds, and may bite at anything.
- Without training or free-diving experience, a swimmer will typically be able to hold his or her breath for only about a minute before losing consciousness.