

Complete Tether Systems

15. Bowswim (\$347 | bowswim.com)

The Bowswim is one of several devices we tested that tethers the swimmer to the side of the pool at elevation, to keep the tether away from the swimmer's feet. This prevents the cord from interfering with the kick and elevates the lower body, allowing the more desirable "swimming downhill" position.

Testers noticed the high quality of all the Bowswim components, which are relatively simple: a receiver (must be inserted into a hole drilled in the pool deck), a carbon fiber telescoping pole, and a braided nylon rope that knots to the pole and to the nylon, neoprene-padded belt. The "simple is better" approach has resulted in a product that will provide a lasting piece of training equipment that anyone from a water-aerobics enthusiast to a highly competitive swimmer can use.

When fully extended, the Bowswim bends only slightly, even with a strong swimmer at the end of the rope. The nylon braid rope does not stretch as rubber tubing does, so the device keeps the swimmer in one place. Some testers viewed this as a negative. Other testers found that swimming against the rope made them acutely aware of their catch in freestyle and backstroke, as the immediate and strong resistance made them catch early and often. The device worked well for all strokes except butterfly, which requires more undulation than the tether will allow.

Bowswim has just released a clamp that secures the unit to a handrail or ladder so that swimmers who travel can take it with them. The clamp was not part of the testing process.

Editor's Note: Two similar products from another manufacturer were tested alongside the Bowswim. The other man-

ufacturer withdrew them from the process after testers broke both of them within seconds of swimming against them. In one case, a tester sustained a minor injury when the product snapped under pressure.

16. HomeSwimmer (\$90 | homeswimmer.com)

There is no drilling involved when installing the HomeSwimmer, but it does require a solid attachment point nearby. Several methods of attachment are included in the kit. A pole extends to the pool bottom and a rubber plate helps stabilize the unit. The HomeSwimmer held up for the most part, although stronger testers were able to unseat the rubber plate and cause the pole to slowly "walk" up the wall as they swam.

At a fraction of the cost, the HomeSwimmer is a good alternative to the Bowswim for anyone on a budget or the casual or recreational swimmer

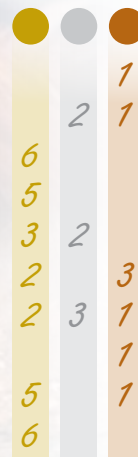
who wants to exercise at home or on the road. Strong competitive swimmers may not have as much success with it. The neoprene belt was quite comfortable and, like the Bowswim's belt, should be placed on the hips, not the waistline, to obtain the best body position.

17. AquaVee Portable Home Swim System (\$80 | aquaveeonline.com)

The AquaVee has a two-point attachment system that comes with suction cups for pool border tiles and an alternative system utilizing silicone adhesive and plastic tiles to accommodate different pool border materials. The two cords can also be attached to lanelines when swimming in a competitive pool. The hips are not elevated as with the Bowswim and HomeSwimmer, but the AquaVee belt (available in three sizes) is inflatable to provide some buoyancy. Butterfly is an option with the

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Pam Sharpe		1
Catherine Brooks	2	1
Diann Uustal	6	
Anne Dunivin	5	
Niclas Ohman	3	2
Benjamin Gogg	2	3
Jeff Murray	2	3
Bruce Goldberg		1
Larry Day	5	1
Mike Freshley	6	



Niclas Ohman swims to three golds and two silvers at the USMS Summer Nationals. Photo: Chris Stevenson

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