

	MANUFACTURER/ MODEL, PRICE, WEBSITE	STYLE (COLORS)	INFLATION TYPE/ MECHANISM/ CYLINDER SIZE	TYPE/ BUOYANCY/ IDEAL FOR	TESTER/OBSERVER COMMENTS	REARMING/REPACKING NOTES
US Coast Guard-Approved Inflatable Life Jackets						
	Mustang Survival MIT 70 - Inshore \$139.99 mustangsurvival.com	Suspender (admiral gray, red, azure)	Automatic Dissolving bobbin 17g	Level 70 15.7 lbs/70N Boating, paddling, sailing, fishing	Tester and observer favorite for its simplicity, ease of use, and comfort. Fits flat and flush against body. Single buckle; first time adjustments were easy. Easy to don and move around in. Fit everyone comfortably. Straps are a little wider than most. Like all the Mustang models, this was very well made and had a quality feel.	Simple to deflate, rearm, repack - like folding a taco. Clear instructions with photos on label. Easy to inspect and maintain.
	West Marine Inshore Life Jacket \$99.99 westmarine.com	Suspender (blue, aqua red)	Auto/Man Dissolving bobbin 24g	V, III performance (USCG-approved only when worn) 22.5 lbs/100N General boating activities, inland waters	A struggle to adjust the first time while wearing, especially for a nonboater. Simple to don once adjusted. Soft neoprene neckline was comfortable. Offered good freedom of movement. One of fastest to inflate. Once inflated, caused some pinching in the neck area. This model was another favorite because it felt very supportive, stable, and kept the wearer's head well above the surface. We liked that it can be converted from automatic to manual inflation for a variety of activities.	Not the easiest to deflate and repack due to large bladder. Lots of steps to fold it up; repacked version wasn't as flat as when purchased. Hook-and-loop tape was hard to match up, leaving raw edges exposed to catch on clothing.
	West Marine Adventurer \$199.99/2 pack westmarine.com	Suspender (navy)	Auto/Man Dissolving bobbin 24g	V, III performance (USCG-approved only when worn) 26 lbs General boating activities, inland waters	Relatively easy to put on. Comfortable around the neck though it isn't lined. No bunching. Nicely finished edges with piping. Very fast inflation. Tight on neck after inflation but can still breathe. We liked that there was a tag inside to help track inspection dates. Can be converted to manual inflation for a variety of activities.	Easy to deflate but requires a bear hug to get all the air out. Easy to rearm, and repacks with only two folds on each side. The hook-and-loop tape lines up nicely, and the piping keeps the raw hook-and-loop tape edge from being exposed.
	Mustang Survival Elite 28 HIT \$274.99 mustangsurvival.com	Front entry (black)	Automatic Hydrostatic pressure 24g	V, III performance for recreational use 28 lbs Boating, fishing	Very fitted, not bulky. Easy to adjust. Buckles on both sides allowed for symmetrical adjustment. Wicking mesh liner; wide shoulders relieve neck fatigue. The area around the hydrostatic mechanism is a bit bulky. Manual pull tab is made from metal and tucked into a keeper (might not be obvious enough). Comfortable and well-situated; feels secure. Wearers liked this jacket but noted it didn't inflate automatically as expected in our tests, perhaps due to the hydrostatic mechanism in our controlled environment. Wearer was able to inflate using the manual pull cord with no issues.	Super easy to deflate. Hydrostatic mechanism is expensive to rearm and requires a tool. Zipper made it hard to repack. Indicator window made it easy to check for arming, but the cylinder itself is wrapped inside the bladder.
	Bass Pro AM33 All Clear \$79.97 basspro.com	Suspender (blue)	Auto/Man Dissolving bobbin 33g	V, II performance in auto mode; III performance in manual mode 35 lbs/150N General boating activities, inland waters	The least expensive USCG-approved jacket evaluated. Wearer could feel seam on neck during dry fit. Only one side of the jacket inflated because the hook-and-loop tape didn't let go. Tester had to coax it open. Lots of buoyancy, and inflation was enough to bring the tester to surface even before bladder was fully expanded. Jacket was a little bulkier and longer than others, and the two sides pushed apart when inflated, making the wearer concerned about security if there were any chop. Rotated the user face-up. Has indicator window for easy inspection.	Ranked middle of the pack on deflating and repacking. The hook-and-loop had exposed edges that will snag some fabrics.
	Spinlock Deckvest LITE \$229.90-\$273.90 spinlock.co.uk	Over the head (black, bleach white, flow green, mercury red, Pacific blue, seagrass green, sun yellow)	Automatic Dissolving bobbin 33.5g	Type II (USCG-approved only when worn) 36 lbs/170N General boating activities, inland waters	It took some trial and error to get jacket donned and fitted; wearer had to consult instructions. Comfortable neck from neoprene lining. A little lumpier than other models. On inflation, the side opposite canister took extra time to fully inflate because the zipper didn't blow out until coaxed, though it didn't affect performance. Jacket quickly rotated the wearer face-up. Head hole is larger than others, so didn't constrict around wearer's neck. Crotch strap was deemed awkward, and it wasn't doing much in our controlled testing. Indicator window. Overall good performance. Has 5-year warranty with registration.	Must unzip fully to deflate. Repacking was complicated by the zipper. Rearming instructions sewn into jacket but no repacking info. Repacked lumpier than when new. Requires unusual size cartridge to rearm.
	Mustang Survival EP38 Ocean Racing \$384.99 mustangsurvival.com	Over the head (black)	Automatic Hydrostatic pressure 33g	V, II performance (USCG-approved only when worn) 38 lbs/170N Open ocean, sailing	Substantial for offshore use with sailing harness, removable crotch straps, integrated spray hood, and lifting loop. Easy to don and adjust; side buckle allowed one-handed adjustment. It worked as expected and turned the tester face-up quickly. Wearer felt secure in the water. Crotch strap helped keep the bladder away from the face. It took some effort to pull out spray hood from back compartment, but easy to put on, not claustrophobic. Wearer had to deflate a bit to remove. The oral inflation tube was well labeled on the outside of jacket. Comes with marine-grade whistle. Lots of places to attach accessories and an offshore tether. Indicator window. Overall, many great features.	Like other models with blow-out zippers (this has 4!), it was a pain to deflate and repack. The zippers blew out while repacking. Refolding hood and crotch straps made it lumpy. The hydrostatic design is expensive to replace and requires a tool (included with kit) to rearm.
	Mustang Survival Khimera 22 Dual Flotation \$239.99 mustangsurvival.com	Over the head (black)	Manual Pull to inflate 12g	Level 70, III equivalent (USCG-approved only when worn) 22 lbs/70N Paddling, sailing	It took some trial and error to put this on, and wearer initially put it on backward. We liked that it was adjustable on all sides for centering and shoulders are also adjustable. Oral inflation tube conveniently located inside jacket top, but wearer felt like it was in her face. Inflation time was average but it is inherently buoyant without inflation. Pull tab is metal, tucked into a holder, so wearer must familiarize with location. Tester felt secure in the water, and it floated her high. Front pocket is a nice feature.	Very easy to deflate; no repacking needed. Rearming is simple but the canister is an unusual size.
	Mustang Survival HIT MD3183 \$279.99 mustangsurvival.com	Suspender (gray-black, red-black, black)	Automatic Hydrostatic pressure 33g	V, II performance for rec. use 33.7 lbs Severe marine environments	This was our tester's personal jacket used in his work as a TowBoatU.S. captain, so familiarity was high. Very heavy-duty. Easy to put on in an emergency. Neoprene neck lining is comfortable for long days of wear. Includes zippered pocket and emergency whistle. Inflated quickly and rolled wearer face up in seconds. Lots of buoyancy, well-constructed. Has indicator window.	Hydrostatic unit is stiff and not intuitive to replace for someone who doesn't do it often. Replacing the inflater is expensive and requires a special tool.
U.S. Coast Guard-Approved Belt Packs						
	West Marine Ultra-Slim \$99.99 westmarine.com	Belt Pack (blue, black)	Manual Pull to inflate 16g	V, III performance (USCG-approved only when worn) 19-26.5 lbs Paddling, fishing, recreational boating	Very low-profile; about the size of a jogger's belt. Hardly know you're wearing it. Easy to put on/adjust. Pull tab hangs fairly low; could get caught on something. Comfortable on land. In the water it was hard to find the pull as it floated away from where wearer thought it would be. Tester came up feet first. Bladder is a pillow that must be hugged or secured around the neck with a strap, a better option than no life jacket, but not effective if victim is incapacitated. Wearer should be briefed about how to activate and what to do once in the water.	Easy to deflate and repack due to pillow design; making sure belt loop and pull tab are in the right spot may take trial and error. No indicator window, so viewing indicator can be difficult if packed incorrectly.
	Mustang Survival Minimalist \$124.99 mustangsurvival.com	Belt Pack (admiral gray, azure)	Manual Pull to inflate 16g	Level 70 (USCG-approved only when worn) 15.7 lbs/70N Paddling, fishing, recreational boating	Wide strap sits nicely on the hips; doesn't dig in. Easy to adjust. More a fat pouch than the Ultra-Slim, so it sticks out a bit but still unobtrusive when twisting or bending. Pillow-style bladder can be clutched or put over the head with a strap. Our wearer was challenged to get the strap over his head without first loosening the belt strap. Has a pictogram of how to wear it, but it's on the bladder so must be taken apart to see it. Same concerns as above.	Easy to deflate and repack. 8 steps for refolding, but rectangular pillow made the process easy; it looked nearly the same as new when back in pouch.