

# PS Ladies Weigh in on Inflatable Fit

Despite the growing trend of marine gear tailored for women, a comfortable inflatable PFD is hard to come by for most women sailors.

Like most PFDs, those we review here are unisex, so we decided it would be beneficial to add “women’s fit” to the rating categories. A group of six women, of varying heights, weights, and builds, tested the PFDs on land, wearing each at least an hour and rating them for comfort and fit. The ratings listed in the Value Guide are an average of the six women’s opinions.

Taller test subjects with broader shoulders preferred the vest-style PFDs like the Mustang and Float-Tech. These testers noted that the inflators on the horseshoe-shaped products, like the Revere ComfortMax, fell across their chests, making them more uncomfortable. A tight fit in the chest also meant more pulling at the neck.

The more petite testers actually preferred the U-shaped products to the vest style as the vests seemed more cumbersome. The U-shaped Viking PFDs were too heavy for most women testers’ tastes. They had a tendency to rub at the collar, and most found it impossible to sit comfortably with the Vikings on.

All women testers tapped the lightweight West Marine products as the most comfortable on land, but noted that they felt less secure than the other PFDs.

Generally speaking, women will have a harder time finding an inflatable PFD that fits properly. Due to the limited size of the market, makers have spent little to no time or effort developing an inflatable PFD tailored for the female body.

If you know of any women-specific PFDs or unisex PFDs that fit a woman well, please let us know. Send email to [practicalsailor@belvoirpubs.com](mailto:practicalsailor@belvoirpubs.com).

