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In-Water Cardio

BY DANIEL PAULLING TESTING PHOTOS BY LAURA HAMEL

The health benefits of swimming are well known. Study after study has highlighted its low impact on joints, its calorie-burning benefits as a full-body exercise, and its ability to reduce an adult's biological age by about 20 years.

Still, some swimmers may do a cardio class, bike, or run for cross-training. But thanks to Colorado Time Systems—which has, as other companies in the fitness industry have, released an underwater trampoline, bicycle, and treadmill—these exercises can now be done in the water, giving you an opportunity to cross-train without worrying about the impact on your joints. (Long known for its timing systems, CTS launched its WaterFit product line after becoming part of PlayCore in 2012.)

The underwater trampoline, bicycle, and treadmill can be used in a backyard pool, assuming it's shallow enough (probably 3.5 to 5 feet deep, depending on how tall you are) and flat enough, or in a class at a local workout facility. This gives you the opportunity to do your favorite types of training in cool water rather than a hot gym.

These in-water cardio devices can also be used for rehabilitation purposes. Professional and major college athletes use underwater treadmills when returning from various types of leg surgeries, light cycling helps people coming back from a knee surgery, and the underwater trampoline can be used for a range of exercises.

WATERFIT AQUATIC TRAMPOLINE | COLORADO-TIME-SYSTEMS.MYSHOPIFY.COM/ COLLECTIONS/WATERFIT | \$1,550

The trampoline exercise craze of the 1980s isn't back—no need to pull out those old headbands and leotards—but trampolines are still useful for exercising.

The WaterFit Aquatic Trampoline comes already assembled and is easy to move around on a pool deck and into and out of the water, something that can be accomplished by just one person as it only weighs around 25 pounds.

It's designed for a range of purposes and users.

People who are rehabbing from a knee or other type of leg injury can do light jogging, squats, calf raises, or jumps in a low-impact environment and on a comfortable surface that isn't slippery. There are no concerns about falling off or cutting yourself on sharp parts.

Exercisers can use the trampoline as part of circuit training, combining lap swimming or biking or running with squat jumps or lunges. There are also land- and water-based trampoline classes that you can use as inspiration to come up with your own exercise routine, and yoga enthusiasts can try different poses in an environment they love.

Depending upon your height and body weight, the depth of the water makes a difference in how you use the trampoline. Testers noted that the trampoline didn't rebound quickly enough when used in deep water, which reduced the effectiveness of exercises such as squat jumps. The ideal depth for most testers was around waist deep, although some liked it a bit deeper so they could incorporate arm movements with resistance.



WATERFIT AQUATIC BIKE |

COLORADO-TIME-SYSTEMS.MYSHOPIFY.COM/COLLECTIONS/WATERFIT | \$2,195

Stationary bikes are among the most popular pieces of cardiovascular equipment because they provide an excellent workout while not placing much stress on joints.

The WaterFit Aquatic Bike requires some assembly, but our testers who put it together reported that the process wasn't hard—the instructions were easy to follow and the necessary tools were included.

Adjusting the height of the seat and handlebars was a cinch. A set of transport wheels made it easy to tilt the bike and roll it across the pool deck. Moving the bike into and out of the water wasn't difficult, but at 30 pounds, it should be done by two people.

The model we tested didn't include a resistance adjuster—although one was included on previous models—and our testers would've liked the ability to increase tension on the bike for a more arduous workout. You can still get a good cardio workout if you pedal at a high cadence (think of using a bike only in a low gear).

Testers reported that it was difficult to drain all the water from the molded plastic pedals once they pulled the bike out of the pool to store it between sessions. The pedals are comfortable and designed so you can slide your bare feet into them, unlike spin-class bikes that require strapping in. This makes it much easier to do a circuit of swimming laps or vertical kicking mixed with time on the bike.

Testers noted that the depth of the pool mattered less with the bike than it did with the trampoline and treadmill, but there was some difference. Remaining in the shallows means you can rest comfortably on the seat without floating away—gravity keeps you in place when your upper body is out of the water. However, moving the bike to slightly deeper water allows you to incorporate some upper body movements, such as sculling or breaststroke armsweeps, with your cycling.

Tested
FOR Masters Swimmers
BY Masters Swimmers



WATERFIT AQUATIC TREADMILL | [COLORADO-TIME-SYSTEMS.MYSHOPIFY.COM/COLLECTIONS/WATERFIT](https://colorado-time-systems.myshopify.com/collections/waterfit) | \$2,250

Some people have a bittersweet view of running. They love the health benefits of the sport but worry about the impact it has on their joints, especially their knees. The WaterFit Aquatic Treadmill allows you to run with minimal impact on your body.

The treadmill comes assembled. It has a set of transport wheels and can be tilted and moved around a pool deck easily. Moving it into and out of the water requires two people because it weighs about 60 pounds. Once the device is in the water, you just need to lift the hand-rail into place.

Testers found that they could get a great workout and get their heart rates up, just like running on land or on a regular treadmill, but with minimal impact. However, the device doesn't have a pace controller—the belt only moves once you begin walking or running—and testers said this takes some getting used to.

Testers' opinions varied on the ideal depth of water in which to use this product. One said waist-high depth seemed to work best, and another said mid-chest was best because it was easiest to get into a rhythm.

