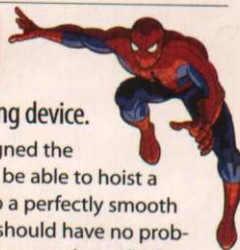


The vulture couldn't believe his luck...

SIX-FOOT HEROES

SPIDERY MAN



Scale walls and mete out justice with this new climbing device.

Spider-Man had better watch his ass. The Gekkomat (German for "automatic lizard climber") lets wannabe web-slingers climb walls without a single radioactive spider bite. The 55-pound device, created by designer-engineer Gerald Winkler, consists of a back-mounted air tank connected to four pads—one for each hand and foot. A combination of suction and friction—hey, our glasses are steamin' up, here!—keeps the pads on the wall while a computer adjusts suction to prevent you from doing a head-plant into Mother Earth. The machine even has a Spidey-sense-style LED display on each pad, keeping you up-to-date on your "vacuum effects" and "pneumatic and electrical energy reserves."

Winkler designed the Gekkomat to be able to hoist a metric ton up a perfectly smooth surface, so it should have no problem hoisting you up the wall of Britney Spears' pool house.

Although there's currently just one working prototype, Winkler has received numerous inquiries, including some from "military groups" that he isn't at liberty to discuss. But he believes the children are the future; Winkler dreams of producing a mass-marketed kids' version for around a grand. Will parents shell out four figures for a toy that helps their children risk death hundreds of feet above the ground? Almost-as-strange things have happened.—*Dan Levine*