

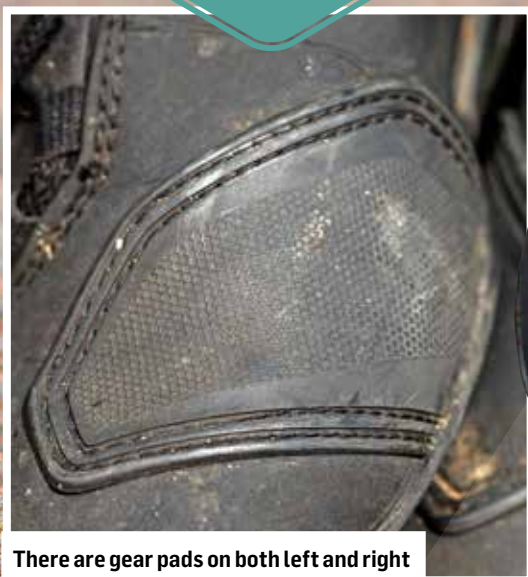
**TRIED & TESTED**

**MCN STAFF RATE THEIR RIDING KIT**

★★★★★

Totally comfy for use on and off the bike

5000 MILES



There are gear pads on both left and right

**Fastback 2 Drystar Waterproof Shoes £179.99**

## 'All-day comfortable boots'

**Tested by Michael Neeves for 10 months / 5000 miles**



With a style evolved from the car racing world (and a passing resemblance to boxing boots), these lace-up boots are slim, flat-soled and give lots of feel and control through the footpegs, gear and back brake levers.

That's useful for the day job, especially on sportier bikes. They don't claim to offer the same level of protection or durability as a full-length armoured boot, but I'm happy to take the trade-off in terms of their extra comfort and practicality on and off the bike. That makes them useful for when you're visiting somewhere, or touring and you don't want to carry an extra of shoes or trainers with you.

I've been wearing ankle height versions, such as the Sektor and Faster 3 Rideknit, for nearly a decade and love them, but they're too breezy for winter riding. That's where these Fastback 2s come in. It's the first time I've tried them and they're much cosier. The top of the boots come up and over your ankle, which not

only keeps you warmer and drier when your trousers ride up on the bike, they'll offer more protection in a spill, too. I still wear all-weather touring boots when the weather is particularly filthy, but all through last winter and spring I've been wearing these on new bike launches and road tests on all types of bikes, in all kinds of weather, including a week-long, 3000-mile ride to Spain where they were supremely comfy. With autumn on its way they'll be back in action again very soon.

Finished in satin leather and microfibre they're easy to wipe clean and with a thick, padded, breathable mesh inner and ankle section, they're warmer and more cushioned than the summer versions. Crucially, they've proved waterproof, even on day-long rides in non-stop rain. They're sturdy and offer a reassuring feeling of solidity with armour at the heel, ankle and extra protection over the toes for gear changing (left and right). I can't vouch for what they're like in a crash, but they're certified to CE 89/686/EEC-CAT 2.

Despite heavy use the stitching, seams and

leather are still in perfect condition. There are slight signs of wear on the moulded rubber soles around the left big toe area, due to down-changes and a lot more on the right through constant back brake use.

They're cheaper than a conventional all-weather touring boot, but costing just under 200 quid, they're still a decent sized investment, but if you shop around they can be found around £40 less. I reckon they're more than worth it for boots you can live in all day.

**Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★**  
[www.alpinestars.com](http://www.alpinestars.com)

### PROS & CONS

- + Comfy and weatherproof and CE approved as well
- Sole has worn due to heavy rear brake use



They come up above the ankle

There is a fair degree of protection