



5 months
ON TEST

Oxford Microfibre Noodle Sponge £5.99

‘Let the noodles do the hard work’



Tested by Gareth Evans for five months

I've got a lot of time for this useful little gadget. It's got two functions: dry dusting and cleaning with fluids. I've done both, so was glad it's machine washable between uses.

For a penny under £6 I reckon it's brilliant value for a reusable microfiber cleaning implement, and the 'noodle' element means it's easy to get right into the nooks and crannies of even the busiest of adventure bike bodywork. It retains loads of fluid too, allowing more to get onto the bike compared with a traditional sponge.

The elastic strap at the back prevents dropping it on a gritty floor, which adds peace of mind for anyone who's dropped a sponge or a cloth mid-clean, writing it off as a cleaning tool in the process to avoid rubbing gravel into your perfect paintwork.

In fact, the noodles are so soft that it really feels like you're looking after your bike, and yet it's well made and there are no indications of quality issues so far.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.oxfordproducts.com

Odd looking but it's very good



Stay dry on or off the machine

Alpinestars Stella Neo Hoodie £279.99

‘An urban classic’



Tested by Saffron Wilson for 10 months

For those taking on an urban commute in all weathers, the Stella Neo Waterproof Hoodie is well worth a look. Made from softshell, the jacket meets the lowest CE A rating for abrasion protection, making it suitable for riding around town. That said, its lightweight construction makes it airy and comfortable enough to wear off the bike as well. It comes equipped with Level 1 shoulder and elbow armour, with pockets for optional back protector and chest protector (sold separately). Without this additional armour, it is easy to squash the jacket into a pannier if you don't want to wear it at the end of your ride.

The detachable hood means that you can stay dry off the bike as well as on it, and the thermal liner means that you can stay a touch warmer (or cooler) depending on how the weather is treating you. One word of wisdom from someone who didn't think it through before the first ride – if you need do to a short dual carriageway hop wearing this jacket, make sure to remove the hood and tuck it in your pocket or else it will create a windsock which, in my case, proved to be a proper pain in the neck! But kudos where it's due – the hood didn't fly off by itself. Once I stopped and removed the hood, I found the Neo to be perfectly comfortable on the move, allowing plenty of movement in the arms and no tightness. I opted for a size up so I had room for jumpers should I need them, and found it to be pretty much spot on.

Although this wouldn't be my go-to jacket for long touring days, as a summer commuting jacket that can handle the ups and downs of British weather, it's a real winner. The waterproofing is remarkably good; I expected it to only withstand a light shower, but after being caught out in some rather heavy downpours I stayed dry.

After 5000 miles it looks as good as new, and the chunky zip is easy to use. So far there is no wear and tear on the stitching, and the elastic around the bottom of the jacket hasn't stretched, but bear in mind I haven't used that for every ride.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
eu.alpinestars.com

5245 miles
ON TEST



Red light indicates hot hands...

4600 miles
ON TEST

Oxford HotGrips Pro £199.99

‘Fast, smart heating for your hands’



Tested by Justin Hayzelden for eight months

Oxford's HotGrips Pro are the latest in the firm's range of hand heaters and boast an 'intelligent heat' function to ensure that they stay exactly as hot as you want them to.

The system is very easy to fit and the heat is controlled by a single button on the lefthand grip. All you need to do is hold the button in for three seconds to fire them up, then each subsequent press cycles through the three degrees of toastiness on offer, from 35°C at the lowest setting right up to 45°C.

Warm-up is very quick, with a discreet LED displaying the level of cosiness selected, and they provide effective heating even in sub-zero riding conditions. Connection is direct to your bike's battery, and the HotGrips Pro have a built-in monitor which switches them off when it detects a drop in voltage – very handy if you're as forgetful as me.

At nearly £200 they're not cheap (although there are some cracking deals online), but they look factory fitted and on a cold day are worth every penny.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
oxfordhotgrips.com



No jokes about Relph's age...

Oxford Drip Pads £9.99

‘No more messy puddles!’



Tested by Simon Relph for eight months

If, like me, you own old bikes, you will be used to the occasional bouts of incontinence when an engine decides to off-load some of its oil all over the workshop floor. This is a real pain to clear up, so I got hold of these Oxford Drip Pads.

I simply side it under the bike after I have been out for a ride. The pads come in packs of eight, four are 2mm thick with a plastic backing, the other four are 5mm thick with no backing. They are both 39cm x 48cm and can absorb and retain up to half-a-litre of most oil-based fluids that may leak out. Also, they can be used to soak up the odd spillage, even if it's just water.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
oxfordproducts.com

8 months
ON TEST