



TRIED & TESTED
 MCN STAFF RATE THEIR RIDING KIT
 ★★★★★



No broken collar bones today, thanks

4000 miles ON TEST



The tab is super secure

Dainese Smart Air £599.99

'Good value and well thought out'

Tested by Carl Stevens for seven months
 Airbags may seem expensive compared to a standard back protector, but they're a worthy investment; just think about how much time you'd be taking off work with a broken collarbone or set of ribs, which have more chance of being saved by an airbag. I've had my fair share of deployments over the years and they've played a huge part in keeping my upper body in one piece, to the point where I rarely ride without one, on both road and track. And they've come a long way in the last few years, with the Smart Air from Dainese offering some impressive features without a mammoth price tag. Firstly, the fact that the inflator is easily replaceable makes it far more

attractive than previous models, which had to be serviced or sent away after a deployment. This means that the vest can be activated three times (with the £109 inflator) before needing a closer inspection and a new bladder to keep it going. Also, there's no need for a subscription, unlike some of its rivals, which is a big bonus. Not only is it good value and well thought out, but it feels comfortable on the bike too. At 1.56kg it's incredibly light, and although it can be worn on top or underneath kit, it fits far better for me underneath most riding gear, as long as there's a small amount of space for inflation – although due to the bulk at the rear, it's not the comfiest airbag to use with a backpack (and, of course, only certain styles should be used to allow for proper inflation). The sizes are true to life (if not a

little bit on the small side in terms of the length) and although there can be no perforation for obvious reasons, due to its slim dimensions and compact size it's one of the coolest airbags I've used. It has a handy pocket in the front for any essentials such as a phone and receipts, and the activating mechanism is secure and easy to use, with a nice tab that can be applied when the vest is not in use. The LED status light for battery life and vibration for arming is also handy for making sure you're ready to roll for every journey. Although the Smart Air is both light and compact, the battery has a reasonable lifespan to it as well, lasting for well over ten hours in a single charge which will be enough for most 'normal' rides. Although that might not seem like a lot it's more than enough for a big day in the saddle, and it only takes around

four hours to fully charge, too. On the subject of which, one slight niggle is in the location of the charging port, as it sits underneath the bottom of the protection and isn't the slickest charging slot to access quickly. Also, although the Dainese app is relatively easy to understand and use for updates and general use once the airbag is connected, it does have a few glitches which can be a bit of a frustration on an Apple device.
MCN Rating ★★★★★
www.nevis.uk.com

PROS & CONS

- + Lightweight, easy to use and great value for money
- A bit bulky at the back where the hardware sits



The rear is a bit bulky for a backpack



The charging port access isn't perfect



1500 miles ON TEST

Loop Experience 2 £29.95

Filter out that unwanted noise

'Ensure you only hear the essential noises'

Tested by Ben Clarke for seven months
 I've been wearing previous generations of Loop earplugs for years but these are my first pair of the latest Experience 2 model. I was sent this limited edition Sublime version but there are plenty of standard options available and often a different limited edition, too. The Experience

is the recommended option for bikers because it offers a 17dB noise cut to protect your hearing while letting you hear the traffic around you and your own engine sound. These were instantly comfortable, I wore them on and off for six hours on the first afternoon and for many more hours in the months since. It's great to be able to hear other traffic around you clearly from a safety perspective, but I also noticed I could hear the

engines of the bikes I was riding better (which is always good). They also let plenty of sound from intercom speakers through and I've found I needed to turn my Packtalk Pro down slightly. They may seem expensive compared to disposable plugs, but their re-usable nature means you will make the money back (just take care not to lose them).
MCN Rating ★★★★★
www.loopearplugs.com

Dane Odin Gloves £149.99

'Summertime specials'

Tested by Justin Hayzelden for four months
 Lightweight, perforated gloves are all very well when the sun is shining, but should you get caught in a shower they can quickly become damp, mushy and miserable. Finding a waterproof pair that work on warmer days to both keep the rain out and stop your hands from overheating can be a challenge, but these Dane Odin gloves managed to cover both bases admirably right through last summer. Construction is a combination of highly flexible textile and abrasion resistant leather, with a Gore-Tex membrane acting as a one-way valve for moisture. They're fully lined, the giving them a high-end feel on your



3200 miles ON TEST

Perfect for a typically changeable summer

hands, and the internals are bonded in such a way that I haven't managed to dislodge them at all, even when my hands ended up a tad clammy due to a particularly warm peak season trail ride. Rainwater, as yet, hasn't found a way in anywhere. The long cuff is of a sufficiently low

profile to fit under every sleeve I've tried, and the dual closure keeps them snug and secure around my wrists. CE certification is 1KP, and at just under £150, they're not prohibitively expensive either.
MCN Rating ★★★★★
dane.eu

Spada Drifter Jeans £109.99

'Stylish, subtle and smart'

Tested by Adam Oldfield for nine months
 These Spada Drifter jeans are a classic biker jean, but with neat details too. A slim fit (albeit slightly tighter than average) they work well for those who do skip leg day. Even with the snug cut, the comfort is still good; these jeans are built for all-day wear, whether you're on two wheels or two feet. The Level 2 CE TetraHex armour is soft and flexible, staying unobtrusive when walking, sitting, or going about your day, which is combined with a single-layer stretch denim material, except around the front of the leg and armour pockets where there is an additional liner. The only caveat is the protective armour does create a degree of extra insulation, which means your hips and knees heat up a bit during prolonged wear on a warmish day. That said, this has been true for every armoured jean I've owned, not just the Drifters. The saving grace here is how easy the armour is to remove; no need to drop your pantaloons completely, you can whip the armour out in seconds utilising Spada's discreet external side zip at each knee. The



Adam's all for the low-profile looks

hip armour, meanwhile, can simply be pulled out from the top of its pocket at the waistband. One small issue I found was with the pocket construction. The lighter material feels great but after about 1000 miles and a few washes, the thread started to loosen on the right-hand pocket. It's a minor thing, probably isolated to my jeans and my aggressive washer. A revisit to school 'home economics' class memories and a quick stitch sorted it. A trivial thing, and perhaps not solely a fault of the product, just something to be aware of. What stands out most is how they've replaced my usual black jeans entirely. That says a lot. These don't scream 'motorcycle gear', which is exactly the point. Stylish, subtle, and smart. The Drifters are low-key enough for everyday wear but perform like proper riding jeans when it counts. A well-balanced blend of style, function and value.
MCN Rating ★★★★★
spadaclotting.com



Comfortable and a good fit

1000 miles ON TEST

Hood Sk11 jeans £189.99

'Impressive and AAA rated'

Tested by Michael Guy for six months
 I've just come back from the launch of the new Yamaha MT-07 where I used the Hood jeans for two long days of riding. I've never been a huge fan of armoured jeans because I've always questioned just how effective they would be in a crash, but these have changed my mind. For a start they are slim fit, which

means the knee and hip armour stays where it should. The armour is by D30 (so it is pleasingly flexible) and the stretch denim has sewn in heavy gold 'D-core' thread which means the jeans are AAA rated for protection. They are comfortable and Hood will adjust the length of the jeans to your leg length at no extra cost.
MCN Rating ★★★★★
Hoodjeans.co.uk