

# Reviews

# Gear up

COMPONENTS, KIT, AND MEDIA SELECTED  
AND REVIEWED BY BIKE JOURNALISTS AND CYCLING UK STAFF

## Put to the test

Is there a product that you think needs reviewing?

Write to: *Cycle*, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ

@ [editor@cyclingsuk.org](mailto:editor@cyclingsuk.org)

### Pros & cons

- + Supportive last
- + Stiff sole
- Slightly short straps

## Shimano XC1 shoes

Comfortable recessed-cleat shoes at a sensible price

**£89.99** [shimano.com](http://shimano.com)

Shimano's cycling shoes invariably offer sound performance and a comfortable fit at an affordable price. The XC1 is no exception. Pleasantly styled, in a choice of black or white, the shoes fitted my feet snugly and without pressure at any point, while the glass fibre-reinforced midsole is stiff enough for vigorous pedalling.

As with any MTB shoe, the moulded rubber outsole bears large blocks designed to provide traction in muddy conditions. There's no provision for the screw-in toe studs found on some high-end MTB or cyclocross shoes, but the forefoot section does have a

pair of small blocks spaced well away from those further back to give plenty of mud clearance. Indeed, the entire outsole is sparingly provisioned with blocks, which besides enhancing grip has the desirable effect of keeping weight down. The two-bolt pedal cleat is, as ever, recessed between the two most substantial tread blocks under the mid-foot.

The nylon midsole, which provides the shoe's stiffness, has much smaller, diamond-shaped, weight-relieving cutaways on the foot-side surface than its predecessor design. This reduces (to nil, going by the riding experience) the tendency for

the sole of the foot to bulge into the cutaways under the force of pedalling, which can cause discomfort at pressure points. The curvature of the midsole's upper surface, which supports the foot, features Shimano's 'Dynalast' concept; the upward curve of the toe section is neither too great nor too small to promote a 'smoother, more energy-efficient upstroke'. It feels comfortable...

Liberally perforated, the upper is a synthetic leather composite material of considerable stiffness when new, although this softens quickly in use. In any case, the excellent fit of the last means the shoe's initial overall stiffness simply means it provides exceptional support when pedalling. While fine for walking around off the bike, it is a bit too stiff for extended pedestrian activity. Closure is by three hook-and-loop straps, which pass over an integrated 'tongue' on the opposing side and are offset laterally in an effort to reduce pressure at the foot's highest point. Weight (size 42): 334g/shoe. ●

**Richard Hallett**

### Other options



#### DHB DORICA MTB SHOE £70.00

Lace-up shoe with chunky, reinforced nylon MTB sole for two-bolt cleats, and a perforated synthetic upper. Weight: 330g per shoe.

[wiggles.co.uk](http://wiggles.co.uk)



#### GIRO RUMBLE VR MTB SHOES £99.99

Another lace-up MTB shoe, the grippy Vibram outsole gives it better walkability than most cycling footwear. Weight: 425g per shoe.

[giro.com](http://giro.com)

### Verdict

*Lightweight, stiff, snug and supportive, and with a smart, understated appearance, the XC1 ticks many boxes for the performance-minded cyclist on road and off.*



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**Pros & cons**

- + Comfortable
- + Durable
- Only one size

**Rivendell Bicycle Works**

# Fatty Rumpkin Green Folding Tyre

Indented tread works well on road and (when dry) off it

**£26.99** [planetx.co.uk](http://planetx.co.uk)

**F**eaturing a distinctive 'inverted' tread pattern, the Fatty Rumpkin is not only an affordable and long-lasting 650B/27.5in road tyre but an interesting holdover from the early days of the modern 650B revival. Manufactured in Japan by Panaracer, the tyre was originally made for Rivendell

Bicycle Works in the US in the mid-noughties. Despite the arrival of newer, lighter and faster 650B tyres, it still offers an all-round performance impressive enough to make it a sound choice today. There's only one size option: 650×41B, which inflates to about 40mm wide on a 23mm rim. It's not designed for tubeless use.

The thick tread 'cap' features cylindrical indents of three sizes. The largest of these, along the tyre centre line, have a block along the centre almost flush with the surface of the cap to give the tyre a continuous running strip when travelling in a straight line. It's a clever way to minimise the effect on rolling of a deep, and long-lasting tread, while the depressions keep the weight of the tyre to a respectable 480g.



The ride is comfortable to the point of plushness without feeling overly sluggish. It's not as fast-rolling as, say, Schwalbe's now-discontinued 40-584 G-One Speed TLE, but is much quicker than heavy-duty rubber such as Continental's Ride Tour. While the Fatty Rumpkin grips well on dry and soaking wet roads, it is less effective on greasy asphalt – I fell off – where it feels more like a slick. Taken off-road, it performs impressively on gravel and dry dirt but the indents fill quickly with wet mud.

Given the depth of the tread cap, the weight indicates a lightweight, supple carcass. This is reflected in the Fatty's fair turn of speed but makes the tyre more susceptible to sidewall cuts. The Force Field is a visually identical version of the tyre with reinforced sidewalls and a 140g weight penalty for those who prioritise puncture resistance over speed and ride comfort. Both versions have a folding bead, although the heavier tyre is said to be too rigid to fold easily. At well under £30, the lighter Rumpkin is less expensive than the obvious competition and, if slightly slower, should last a lot, lot longer. ●

**Richard Hallett**

**Other options**



**SCHWALBE MARATHON PLUS**  
**£38.99**

The classic long-distance, slow-rolling but puncture-resistant tyre. In 650B guise (40-584 or 27.5×1.5in) it weighs 920g.  
[schwalbe.com](http://schwalbe.com)



**CONTINENTAL RIDE TOUR**  
**£21.95**

Wire-bead heavyweight with tremendous longevity and flat resistance and a suitably stolid ride. The 42-584 (27.5×1.6) version weighs 720g.  
[conti-tyres.co.uk](http://conti-tyres.co.uk)

**Verdict**

*Whether seen as fast and comfortable for such a sturdy tyre or tough and durable given its surprising lack of excess weight, the Fatty Rumpkin is real all-rounder of a 650B road tyre and a low-cost option for the long distance all-roads rider.*



## Endura Hummvee Zip-Off Trouser II

Take two garments into the shower?

**£69.99** [endurasport.com](http://endurasport.com)



**Pros & cons**

- + Good value
- + Versatile
- A little bulky as trousers

### Other options



▲  
**ENDURA HUMMVEE 3/4 SHORT II WITH LINER** **£65.99**

Three-quarter length shorts seem to be less popular these days but they keep your knees warm and work well with long socks for colder conditions.  
[endurasport.com](http://endurasport.com)



▲  
**CRAGHOPPERS KIWI PRO II CONVERTIBLE TROUSERS** **£60**

Stretch-fabric walking trousers with zip-off legs. They should be comfortable on the bike: I've done thousands of miles in Kiwi Pro Shorts.  
[craghoppers.com](http://craghoppers.com)

**E**ndura's Hummvee range includes the Trouser II (£54.99) and the Short II (£59.99, including liner short). The Zip-Off Trouser II is a combination of both. The trousers unzip just above the knees to become shorts.

Endura pitch these zip-off trousers as a solution for commuters and mountain bikers riding in variable temperature conditions, like leg warmers for cyclists who don't wear lycra. They missed namechecking tourers and bikepackers, who might want the morning and evening warmth of trousers without the pack size of an extra garment. While they're obviously bike wear – to the extent that they'd look odd in an office – they look fine in touring/outdoor settings.

You can keep your shoes on when you switch between trousers and shorts. The lower legs have zips up the sides to give a bigger opening for the

feet. The zips above the knees, meanwhile, are colour coded so you won't accidentally fasten the right lower leg to the left shorts leg or vice versa.

The lower legs have velcro ankle tabs and calf strips to limit flapping and drivetrain interference while cycling. This works well for mountain biking, transport cycling, or touring – anywhere that aerodynamics isn't a big concern. On a road bike the legs are still baggy enough to catch the breeze. There's no stretch in the nylon anywhere but the waist, and the fit is fairly generous. With a 31in waist, I found the size S roomy.

The Hummvee Zip-Off is compatible with Endura's Clickfast liner so you can have a padded undershort if you want. I found them comfortable enough without. You sit on a durable seam-free panel, and the wide elasticated waist and stretch panel just below it provide an unrestrictive fit that doesn't

expose your lower back. There's a button fastening at the waist – much better than a press-stud – and a webbing belt.

I've found Endura clothing in general to be hard wearing and well stitched. So far these trousers bear out that view. The ripstop nylon fabric is showing no signs of wear. They're not waterproof but do have a water repellent finish to keep the worst off. Like most non-lycra legwear, they're well supplied with pockets: two zipped hand pockets, a zipped thigh pocket, and two large, Velcro-fastened rear pockets each big enough for an OS map. Sizes: S-XXL.

**Dan Joyce**

### Verdict

*Fully featured cycling trousers that double as shorts. They're cheaper than separate items and take up less space in your luggage. On changeable day rides, the zip-offs will fit in jersey pockets.*