

Summer boots

**20
TESTED**
£70-£230



WHY YOU CAN TRUST THE TRIANGLE

FALL OFF A bike and there's one guarantee – your feet and ankles are going to touch the ground. And they are highly susceptible to injury, so it's worth spending money on a pair of good boots.

You want them to be sturdy, but also look good and not make it a pain to walk or move around on the bike. Millions of pounds are spent in research and development labs on making them look great, but we want to know how well they work, too.

We've tested 20 pairs, ranging from £70 to a hefty £230.

Our tests are designed to simulate a crash to see how well the boots cope with abrasion against the road surface, crushing under the weight of a bike, stabbing by sharp objects and impacts against hard surfaces. We also spent hundreds of road miles checking they were comfortable.

The testing system:

RIDE tests are devised by bikers and carried out by bikers. Where necessary we draft in expert help and create special testing rigs. We ensure that every test is fair and that products are rated on their merits. See page 105 for more on this month's testing.

What the tags mean:

The BEST BUY tag indicates that a product is not only good, but is excellent value for money too.

A RECOMMENDED tag means a product does a good job at a reasonable price.

The tester:

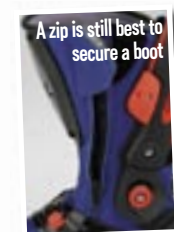
RIDE's Tony Hoare covers a minimum of 10,000 miles a year testing gear and bikes. He has been reporting on biking products for half a decade now.



WORDS: TONY HOARE PICTURES: SIMON HIPPERSON

FASTENER

A zip is the most trusted method of keeping a boot on your foot. This should be covered with a Velcro flap to shield it from the road. Some boots have a lace system inside to keep them secure.



GEARCHANGE PAD

Constant bashing against the gearshift lever can be a pain, which is where this handy protector comes in. It should be overlaid, not stitched in, so that it is stronger and doesn't rub your foot.

INNER BOOT

The real top-end stuff comes with an inner boot. This is usually a thin plastic boot which supports your foot and ankle, then a boot goes over the top to provide impact and abrasion protection.



MATERIAL

Most boots are made from either leather or a man-made material called Lorica. Leather is the most protective of the two, but Lorica is lighter. Our abrasion test will check the quality here.

PROTECTION

If you fall off, your feet and ankles will touch down and they need protecting. Hard armour should save you from heavy blows and should be located on either side of your anklebone and on the shin.

CALF ADJUSTMENT

Comfort is key and you will want some calf adjustment to keep them snug. Always try on boots with your leathers to make sure you can fit them inside the boots while still doing them up securely.

TOE SLIDERS

These are designed to save your boot from damage. Check out the replacement method as some have mounting systems that are vulnerable to damage. Find out the price of new ones too.

SOLE

This should be stiff to avoid crushing injuries. We check for this in our test. Some boots have a sole that isn't designed for walking, so look for a softer option if you spend time on your feet.

ANKLE SUPPORT

Posher boots have support at the ankle and heel to keep the boots rigid. They're designed to act like a shock absorber, giving you the flexibility to walk and change gear, but support you in an accident.

FLEXIBILITY

Boots should stop your foot flexing, saving you from twisting injuries in a crash. You want flexibility at the joint between ankle and foot for gears and brakes.



Check that your boots have enough flexibility for gear shifts and braking

REV'IT FREESTYLE

£90

CONTACT: 00800 7384 8638

Ankle-length boot which was let down by the lack of any shin coverage, hence the zero mark for impact protection. A good result in the cut test doesn't make up for poor performance in abrasion and crush tests. Our rider refused to continue wearing the boots when the Velcro fasteners came undone when flexing his ankles to change gear.



OVERALL RATING
20/55

ABRASION: 2/10
IMPACT: 0/10
CUT: 8/10
CRUSH: 4/10
ROAD TESTING: 6/15

BULLSON PEAK

£70

CONTACT: 0800 165165

Poor results in abrasion, impact and cut tests help put these touring-style boots near the bottom of the list. Our rider didn't like them in road testing, either. They didn't grip well at the ankle or the foot, and the Velcro fastening rubbed on the calves when the boots were worn under trousers. They're basic, but inexpensive.



OVERALL RATING
25/55

ABRASION: 3/10
IMPACT: 3/10
CUT: 5/10
CRUSH: 6/10
ROAD TESTING: 8/15

RAINERS 925

£130

CONTACT: 0870 421 4025

An average overall performance is let down by a terrible result in the crush test. These were the worst of the 20 boots on test in this category, coping with around half as much pressure as the average performers. The rest of the results were OK and our rider liked them, once they'd broken in, saying they gave excellent feel and comfort.



OVERALL RATING
28/55

ABRASION: 4/10
IMPACT: 6/10
CUT: 5/10
CRUSH: 1/10
ROAD TESTING: 12/15

XPD XP-5R

£180

CONTACT: 01536 526460

Our rider described these as the most uncomfortable boots he'd ever worn. The problem was a severe rubbing at the ankles, so check carefully if you're thinking of buying. They did poorly in abrasion and cut tests and were average in the crush test. Lots of plastic armour and an inner boot helped get a good score in the impact test.



OVERALL RATING
24/55

ABRASION: 2/10
IMPACT: 7/10
CUT: 4/10
CRUSH: 5/10
ROAD TESTING: 6/15

XPD VR-5

£110

CONTACT: 01536 526460

These were by far the worst performers in the cut test. The blade penetrated 3mm further than the next worst boots, which is around a 10 per cent difference. They did OK in impact and crush tests, but were below par in the abrasion test. Our rider liked them, but the fit around the calf was tight – a problem for chunkier riders.



OVERALL RATING
27/55

ABRASION: 2/10
IMPACT: 6/10
CUT: 1/10
CRUSH: 5/10
ROAD TESTING: 13/15

FRANK THOMAS SABRE

£130

CONTACT: 01933 410272

Among the strongest boots here, scoring full marks in the crush test. Only the chunky-soled Alberg boot better resisted crush. But it was let down by poor scores in abrasion – they're kangaroo leather – and road testing. Our rider said they were fairly comfortable, but old-fashioned in construction and looks.



OVERALL RATING
29/55

ABRASION: 2/10
IMPACT: 5/10
CUT: 5/10
CRUSH: 10/10
ROAD TESTING: 7/15

DIADORA EAGLE

£100

CONTACT: www.buffalo.uk.com

Just below average performance from these boots, which were scuppered by poor results in abrasion and crush tests. They did very well in impact and cut testing, but the final nail was driven in by a bad road-testing report. Our rider found the gearchange pad rubbed his foot painfully, hitting the Diadoras' mark.



OVERALL RATING
31/55

ABRASION: 2/10
IMPACT: 9/10
CUT: 8/10
CRUSH: 4/10
ROAD TESTING: 8/15

HEIN GERICKE PSX-T1R

£90

CONTACT: 0800 165165

A lack of shin armour on these ankle-length boots means zero marks for impact, which drags their score down considerably. They scored top points in abrasion and cut testing and stood up well to the crush test, too. Our rider said they were reasonably comfortable to wear off the bike, but didn't like the lack of protection when riding.



OVERALL RATING
32/55

ABRASION: 10/10
IMPACT: 0/10
CUT: 10/10
CRUSH: 7/10
ROAD TESTING: 5/15

TRIUMPH EXPEDITION

£150

CONTACT: 01455 453182

There's armour on the shins and ankles of these waterproof sports-touring boots, but they came out bottom for impact. That, and a below average abrasion score, drag down a reasonable performance. Our rider found them fiddly to get on, thanks to a lace system and Velcro strap, but they're comfortable and waterproof.



OVERALL RATING
33/55

ABRASION: 4/10
IMPACT: 1/10
CUT: 6/10
CRUSH: 8/10
ROAD TESTING: 14/15

ALPINESTARS SUPERTECH VENT

£230

CONTACT: www.alpinestars.com

These range-topping race boots did poorly in the crush test. Only the Rainers boots, which cost £100 less than the Alpinestars, fared worse. The rest of the scores were average, except for road-testing. Our rider described them as incredibly comfortable and only marked them down because they're a pain to get on.



OVERALL RATING
32/55

ABRASION: 5/10
IMPACT: 5/10
CUT: 6/10
CRUSH: 3/10
ROAD TESTING: 13/15

ALPINESTARS SMX PLUS

£190

CONTACT: www.alpinestars.com

For £190 boots, these results aren't good enough. They're great for impact protection, only losing out to the overall test winners, but the rest of the results are below average. Our road tester loved them, except for the fiddling involved to put them on or take them off, but that doesn't make up for the protection scores.



OVERALL RATING
33/55

ABRASION: 3/10
IMPACT: 9/10
CUT: 4/10
CRUSH: 4/10
ROAD TESTING: 13/15

ALTBERG ROADSTER MICRO

£135

CONTACT: 01748 850615

Boots don't come much stronger than this, but the Altbergs are let down by a lack of armour. They get one mark because they soaked up some impact in that test. In the crush test, our lab technicians turned off the machine once they knew these boots would score top marks. Our rider found them cumbersome to wear.



OVERALL RATING
33/55

ABRASION: 9/10
IMPACT: 1/10
CUT: 7/10
CRUSH: 10/10
ROAD TESTING: 6/15

REV'IT ERGO

£120

CONTACT: 00800 7384 8638

Maximum marks in road testing help push this Dutch firm's boots up the pecking order. Our rider said they were perfect as all-season touring boots, if a bit too bland for sportier riders. The boots did well in the cut test, but were too susceptible to abrasion, impact and crush to trouble the top-end of the score table.



OVERALL RATING
33/55

ABRASION: 3/10
IMPACT: 3/10
CUT: 8/10
CRUSH: 4/10
ROAD TESTING: 15/15

HEIN GERICKE HG RACE

£100

CONTACT: 0800 165165

Poor abrasion and crush test results stop these boots from making a real impact. They're well down the list in abrasion and below average in crush. In the cut test, they're only beaten by another Hein Gericke boot. Our rider liked them, but was not convinced by the protection. The results suggest he might be right.



OVERALL RATING
34/55

ABRASION: 2/10
IMPACT: 6/10
CUT: 9/10
CRUSH: 4/10
ROAD TESTING: 13/15

SIDI VERTIGO

£165

CONTACT: 01384 413841

Perhaps the most high-profile new product of 2005, but it's not all good news for the Sidi Vertigo. The abrasion resistance score is poor and the crush result is below average. Impact and cut scores are good and our rider liked them in road testing. But the plastic on the back of the boot makes sidestands tricky to use.



OVERALL RATING
34/55

ABRASION: 2/10
IMPACT: 7/10
CUT: 7/10
CRUSH: 5/10
ROAD TESTING: 13/15

HELD HUNTER

£107

CONTACT: 01283 820508

The Held boots finish fifth in our test, but the abrasion and crush test results are below average, while the impact test score is only average. They did well in the cut test and our rider liked them, saying they were comfortable if bland-looking. He even found the waterproofing effective over 1400 rain-lashed miles going to the Nürburgring.



OVERALL RATING
35/55

ABRASION: 4/10
IMPACT: 6/10
CUT: 8/10
CRUSH: 4/10
ROAD TESTING: 13/15

HOW WE DID IT

■ Abrasion

This tests how long it takes to wear through the outer and leave a hole. Two samples of the outer were dropped onto an abrasive belt to see how long they would take to wear through.

■ Impact test

We put key areas of the boots over a rigid anvil containing a device to measure the force transmitted through the boots. A mass was then dropped on to the boot and the transmitted force was measured at the anvil.

■ Cut test

This was conducted at one point on the inside of the leg, where boots are considered to give the lowest level of

protection. The samples of boot were put over a modelling clay base and a 1kg mass, with a sharp blade on the end, was dropped on to the boot sample.

■ Transverse crush

The sole should be stiff enough to protect you from crushing forces. To test this, we gradually crushed the boots' soles between two parallel plates until the boot had crushed by 20mm. The peak force it required to crush the sole was measured to give the score.

■ Road testing

Our test riders used the boots for hundreds of miles and marked them on comfort, feel and ease of use. They then scored them out of 15.

BMW PRO RACE

£190

CONTACT: 0800 777155

If you want reasonable performance in all categories, these could be for you. They scored average marks in all four tests and our rider found them very comfortable. They're slightly stiff, but are OK on a sportsbike. But the harsh half of the Velcro is on the closure flap, so you have to grip it and irritate your fingers.

- ABRASION: 5/10
- IMPACT: 6/10
- CUT: 7/10
- CRUSH: 6/10
- ROAD TESTING: 13/15



SIDI VERTIGO CORSA

£230

CONTACT: 01384 413841

These high-end race boots take the second best overall score in our test, but their abrasion-resistance is the worst in our test. Even half marks in that test and these would have a Recommended tag. They did well in the other tests and our rider gave them full marks on the road, saying they're comfortable and practical.

- ABRASION: 1/10
- IMPACT: 9/10
- CUT: 9/10
- CRUSH: 6/10
- ROAD TESTING: 15/15



POSITION	BOOT RESULTS	PRICE	TEST RESULTS					TOTAL /55
			ABRASION/10	IMPACT/10	CUT/10	CRUSH/10	ROAD TESTING/15	
1	Stylmartin GP Sonic	£165	3	10	9	8	13	43
2	Sidi Vertigo Corsa	£230	1	9	9	6	15	40
3	BMW Pro Race	£190	5	6	7	6	13	37
4	Oxtar TCS Evo RX	£190	3	8	5	6	14	36
5	Held Hunter	£107	4	6	8	4	13	35
6	Hein Gericke HG Race	£100	2	6	9	4	13	34
6	Sidi Vertigo	£165	2	7	7	5	13	34
8	REV'IT Ergo	£120	3	3	8	4	15	33
8	Altberg Roadster Micro	£135	9	1	7	10	6	33
8	Triumph Expedition	£150	4	1	6	8	14	33
8	Alpinestars SMX Plus	£190	3	9	4	4	13	33
12	Hein Gericke PSX-T1R	£90	10	0	10	7	5	32
12	Alpinestars Supertech Vent	£230	5	5	6	3	13	32
14	Diadora Eagle	£100	2	9	8	4	8	31
15	Frank Thomas Sabre	£130	2	5	5	10	7	29
16	Rainers 925	£130	4	6	5	1	12	28
17	XPD VR-5	£110	2	6	1	5	13	27
18	Bullson Peak	£70	3	3	5	6	8	25
19	XPD XP-5R	£180	2	7	4	5	6	24
20	Rev'IT Freestyle	£90	2	0	8	4	6	20

Manufacturers have their say...

All the manufacturers or importers had a chance to comment. Here's what they said:

Hein Gericke "All our gloves have been proven to perform in real-life situations but we are constantly wghghghghghghgh

STYLMARTIN GP SONIC

£165

CONTACT: 0871 919 2900

The clear winners, with great performances in impact, cut and crush testing, plus a good score from our road tester. Unfortunately the abrasion score is down the scale, but otherwise they're solid boots. Our rider found them a bit fiddly to put on and questioned the styling, but the plastic helped the boots score highest of the 25 boots in the impact test. A good-performing boot and the price isn't silly, either.



VERDICT

NO BOOT here picks up a BEST BUY triangle as you have to compromise in at least one area with all of the boots. A RECOMMENDED triangle goes to the Stylmartin boots for their impressive scores in most tests categories, especially road testing.

Sidi's Vertigo Corsa would have picked up a triangle too, but a worst-on-test abrasion score means we can't hand one out in this instance.

We suggest you analyse the boots' performances in the individual tests and work out what is most important to you, then go from there when making your selection.