

THE RIDE PRODUCT TEST

Sub-£100 winter gloves

Keep the cold at bay – and your fingers warm

Words and Pictures Jim Blackstock

FOR MANY, WINTER is a time to put the bike away and adopt a warmer, drier transport regime. For others, it is simply another season – in fact plenty of riders actively look forward to winter. The key to enjoying your riding throughout the year – and particularly in winter – is the right gear; gloves are a key part of that.

If you do a lot of miles, you probably already have a textile suit with thermal liners. But the hands are in the firing line – and unless you keep them warm, you could be in real trouble.

Cold hands are an inconvenience at best, but downright dangerous at worst. You can easily become distracted by the unpleasant sensation of cold hands and begin to lose feeling, which can adversely affect your ability to control the bike. So, if you are going to ride throughout winter, you need decent winter gloves.

Some riders choose to use thinner three-season gloves with heated grips, for the feel the gloves give and the grips providing the warmth. But other riders may find it isn't the inside of their hands that suffers; rather, it's the back of their hands or their fingers. In this case, thicker winter gloves are what are needed.

However, insulating your hands can also mean insulating them from feel for the bike. But modern materials and construction techniques can make this less of an issue than it used to be.

So, we have assembled eight pairs of gloves from the big players in the market to see how they perform in the various requirements: keeping your hands warm and dry, and allowing you to feel the bike's controls.

Off to the freezer we go... ➔

YOUR TESTER



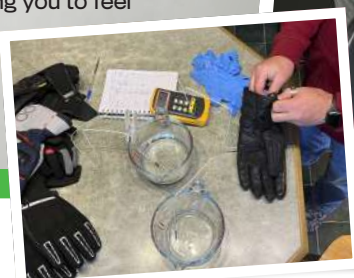
Jim Blackstock

Products editor Jim tends to suffer with cold hands so

effective winter gloves are essential. He has wide hands, and short fingers and thumbs



▶ Heat loss in controlled water sample demonstrates insulation



How we tested them

We asked each manufacturer to supply a pair of sub-£100 winter gloves in Medium size. We tested them the same way did we did in 2022, with a road test and a series of empirical measurements.

➤ **Fit** We assessed the fit of each pair; the relationship between finger length and thumb, the degree of bagginess of each digit and how easy each was to get on and off. We looked at the fastening

methods and the ease of getting over and under jacket cuffs.

➤ **Comfort** We considered how the lining felt against the skin and any tight points or intruding seams, for example. We also looked at how they articulated to allow for movement on the bike.

➤ **Feel** Through their insulation, winter gloves introduce a degree of disconnect with the bike's controls. So, we looked at how

each glove fared, as well as how inputs translated to the throttle.

➤ **Confidence** This was a subjective assessment of how protective the gloves felt. All the gloves are CE-rated at 1 KP.

➤ **Warmth** A latex glove was filled with a measured quantity of water at a known temperature and placed inside the test glove. The cuff was insulated and the glove placed in the freezer. The

temperature of the water was measured after 30 minutes – the lowest temperature loss gained the highest marks.

➤ **Waterproofing** Wearing the gloves, we placed them in a bucket of water to the wrist for 10 minutes, clenching fists for 10 repetitions four times to simulate use on the bike. We gave 10 marks for total dryness with a mark taken away for every wet digit.



▲ Hands feel the full force of the winter air - so well-insulated riding gloves are essential kit

RiDE
TELLS IT LIKE IT IS
Our product tests are carried out by real bikers with years of experience and on real bikes and are combined with empirical testing developed and carried out by qualified engineers.

WHAT THE TRIANGLES MEAN

For more than two decades, the RiDE Best Buy and Recommended triangles have stood for performance and value for money.



➤ A RiDE **Best Buy** award means that a product has been tested under real-world and, where appropriate, laboratory conditions to assess its performance in all relevant criteria and has excelled in its field, while offering exceptional value for money.



➤ A RiDE magazine **Recommended** triangle means that a product has either done an outstanding job at a higher price or a reasonable job but at a significantly lower price. So while not worthy of a Best Buy, it still performs very well in one of these criteria.

➤ The RiDE Best Buy and Recommended triangles stand for quality and value for money. Look for them when shopping.

KNUCKLE PROTECTION
D30 armour over the knuckles remains flexible but protects in an impact.



8 Richa Sub Zero 2 £79.99

Reasonable feel but too cold for winter

www.nevis.uk.com

The Richas are the only pair of short gloves submitted by the manufacturers or suppliers - an odd choice bearing in mind the company won the last two winter glove tests.

They are on the smaller side of Medium - they're quoted as a Euro size 8, so try before you buy based on Medium. For me, they are tight to get on past the main width of my hand, but once on they feel nice albeit with long thumbs - the addition of spandex into the composition presumably helps. They are easy to fasten with a single wrist strap.

The lining feels nice against the skin and they aren't overly

bulky. Confidence is at best acceptable, with D30 sections across the knuckles, a few pads on the fingers and a double layer of material over the heel of the palm and on the outside of the hand but no more shock absorption.

On the bike they remain comfortable with no seams digging into the hand. Feel is pretty good - they don't feel particularly thick, though the lining seems to move around within the shell. The lining continues to feel nice but there's a slight clammy feeling in use, which makes taking them on and off more difficult if you get a little sweaty.

In the freezer test, the relatively thin construction affected warmth, with the second-highest temperature loss, even with the same amount of insulation material in the wrist section.

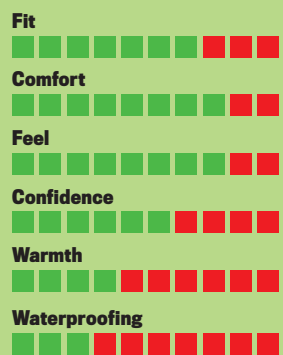
In the waterproofing test, the left thumb began to leak despite ensuring the water level remained below the edge of the gusset on the wrist strap. This leak eventually soaked the whole left hand, so we took off another two marks because the gusset offered no protection and could conceivably allow water in during use, depending where the jacket cuff sits.

VERDICT
Unsurprisingly, a short glove has limited appeal - and performance - for wet and cold conditions.

BENCH TEST

Water retained 201ml
Temperature loss 16.4°C

THE SCORES



Total 36/60

THE FACTS

- Material** Polyester, nylon, spandex
- Membrane** Aquashell
- Insulation** PrimaLoft
- Knuckle protection** D30
- CE rating** 1 KP
- Visor wipe** ✓
- Touchscreen compatible** ✓
- Dry weight** 174g
- Wet weight** 375g

'The thin construction affected their warmth'



RECYCLED LINING

The lining is made from Repreve, produced from recycled plastics from the ocean, and feels lovely.



6 Bering Siberia £64.99
Lightweight, flexible and low price
www.bikerheadz.co.uk

The Berings are very light – the lightest here – and thin and flexible, so should offer decent feel, although possibly at the cost of warmth.

They go on easily and feel very nice against the skin – the lining is made from Repreve, the material constructed from recycled plastic bottles removed from the oceans.

Fit is reasonable but the thumbs feel huge – both long and overly baggy. Additionally, the wrist strap is far too short. Putting the gloves on, it pops out of the metal retaining ring – it's easy to put back in with a bare hand but harder with a baggy, gloved hand.

Confidence isn't massive – there's hard armour over the knuckles, a thin padded section on the heel of the palm that extends to the outside of the hand, and some narrow padded section on the fingers, but that's it. No visor wipe is surprising, but the smartphone-compatible fingertips seem to work fine (although one strip began to come off after the road test).

In use, they are very lightweight and flexible and allow easy movement on the bike's controls. Feel is really good – as you'd expect from such lightweight and flexible gloves – and comfort remains

good as well, although there was a feeling of clamminess as the ride went on.

The cuffs go under or over jacket sleeves easily enough but that wrist strap is so annoying that we've removed one mark from the Fit scores. In the freezer test they gave a middle-of-the-road performance suggesting an acceptable level of insulation – slightly surprising given the degree of feel.

On the waterproofing test the left hand remained dry but the right began to allow water to enter via the thumb. As a result, the entire hand was wet by the end of the test.

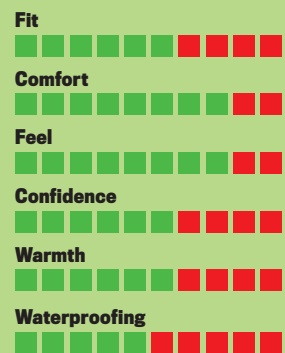
VERDICT

Comfortable and with reasonable feeling, these were ultimately too cold and not waterproof enough.

BENCH TEST

Water retained **271ml**
Temperature loss **15.3°C**

THE SCORES



Total 39/60

THE FACTS

- Material** Polyester, polyurethane, goat leather
- Membrane** Unknown
- Insulation** Unknown
- Knuckle protection** Hard
- CE rating** 1 KP
- Visor wipe** ✗
- Touchscreen compatible** ✓
- Dry weight** 218g
- Wet weight** 489g

'Surprising freezer test given the degree of feel'

5 Alpinestars Tourer W-7 V2 Drystar £99.99

Sporty touring gloves with great feel

eu.alpinestars.com

Not surprisingly, the Alpinestars have a sporty, touring feel to them and appear to use technical construction methods and materials to achieve a winter glove. They feel quite thin and flexible and go on nicely, with an odd combined wrist/cuff strap that works quite well.

Once on, they fit nicely with good finger length though the thumbs feel long. Comfort is good with a nice feel from the lining and they are very light – the second-lightest full-length glove here.

Confidence is reasonable, with what Alpinestars calls ‘Viscoelastic’ protection over

the knuckles that feels like hard armour. There’s also padding on the fingers, the heel of the palm and base of the thumb, and on the outside of the hand and the wrist. No visor wipe but they controlled my iPhone easily and the cuff fastening system means there’s plenty of material to go over a jacket’s cuffs. They will also easily go inside a sleeve, despite the padding on the outside of the wrist.

On the bike they feel nice and fit is reasonable, but that slightly baggy feeling persists. This affects the feel too, as the movement in the shell creates a disconnect between

the hand and the bike. The glove also doesn’t hold the grips that well, relying on a small section of leather to generate the connection.

In the freezer test that lightweight construction showed up as a weakness – they showed the greatest temperature difference so score lowest for warmth.

But in the waterproofing test they kept both hands bone dry though, again, there was a feeling of chill against the skin while submerged – suggesting the waterproofing comes in part from the membrane that would appear to sit inside the insulation.

VERDICT

Comfortable and with great feel and waterproofing, but these were the coldest gloves on test.

THE FACTS

Material Soft shell, leather

Membrane Drystar

Insulation Thinsulate

Knuckle protection Viscoelastic

CE rating 1 KP

Visor wipe X

Touchscreen compatible ✓

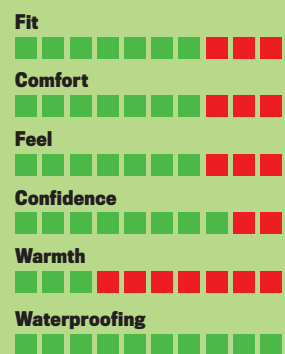
Dry weight 233g

Wet weight 494g

BENCH TEST

Water retained 261g/ml
Temperature loss 17.2°C

THE SCORES



Total 42/60

‘Lowest warmth score... but both hands were dry’



FASTENERS

Double fasteners with linked wrist and cuff straps. Seems strange, but it works.



Alpinestars describes this as ‘Viscoelastic’ protection

Looks complicated, but works well



3 Knox Storm £99.99

Bulky, but warm and dry

www.planet-knox.com

The Knox Storms are monsters - they are bulky, suggesting they should do well at keeping your hands warm, although there may be a trade-off in feel for the bike. They are surprisingly flexible, though, and go on nicely, fitting my hands very well.

The length of the fingers and thumbs works well for me, although the width of the thumb is a little baggy so my digit moves inside the glove. The lining feels lovely against the skin and they articulate very well, while the single cuff fastening closes with the Lift and Lock strap system, which works well.

Confidence is a mixed bag; soft Micro-Lock knuckle armour dents it slightly but the palm features two hard protectors - as per most of Knox's range - and there are pads on the fingers. The smartphone-compatible fingertips worked my iPhone fine and there's a visor wipe on the left thumb.

On the bike they feel bulky but the initial fit remains very good, as does the comfort - no intrusions nor seams apparent. They fit over or under jacket cuffs, but a function of that bulk is feel that is not on par with some of the other gloves. Suede

sections across the palm don't appear to hold the bike's grips particularly well, either.

They did well in the freezer test, retaining warmth nicely; and in the waterproofing test, with both hands remaining completely dry. However, my fingers became quite chilly, suggesting the waterproofing mechanism is down to a membrane located close to the skin and that the insulation became waterlogged.

The increase in their weight backs up this hypothesis - suggesting that while static warmth is good, they may lead to chills in cold and wet weather.

VERDICT

Good fit, warm and totally dry, although a rather disconnected feel from the controls.

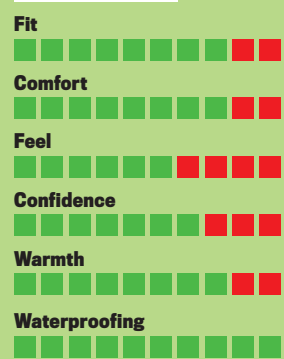
THE FACTS

Material	Goat leather
Membrane	Hipora
Insulation	Thinsulate
Knuckle protection	Micro-Lock
CE rating	1 KP
Visor wipe	✓
Touchscreen compatible	✓
Dry weight	287g
Wet weight	629g

BENCH TEST

Water retained	342ml
Temperature loss	14.2°C

THE SCORES



Total 47/60

'They retained warmth and kept both hands dry'



LIFT AND LOCK
 Wrist closing draws straps in with main cover flap for snug, secure fastening.



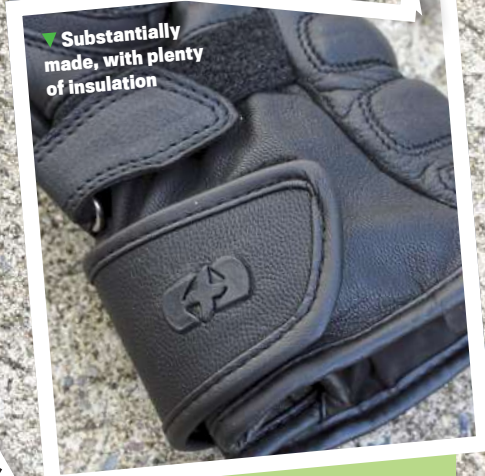


GREAT WARMTH

Just as in our previous winter glove test, the Oxfords were the warmest - picking up a perfect score.



Visor wipe is a neat touch



Substantially made, with plenty of insulation



2 Oxford Hamilton £69.99
Very good gloves at a very decent price
www.oxfordproducts.com

The Oxfords appear big on insulation and padding and, as a result, have a bulky and heavyweight feel to them - which is also due in part to their being formed in leather.

However, they slip on very easily and once on the fit is very good - perfect finger length other than the left index finger and slightly long thumbs for my hands. The lining feels great and they articulate well - once you've got them on, they don't feel as bulky as they look.

Confidence is high thanks to that leather construction as well as hard knuckle armour. There's also padding

on the fingers and the full length of the thumb, on the heel of the palm and along the outside of the wrist. There's a useful visor wipe on the left index finger, and although they don't claim to be smartphone-compatible I had no problems using mine while wearing them.

In use, the feeling of slight bulk continues, again due in part to their insulation that should offer good warmth and the leather construction.

Feel for the bike is pretty good - better than you would imagine given the weight of the insulation. The palms' silicone panels grip the bars

well and their articulation means you can easily get to the levers, while the insulation doesn't seem to provide such a disconnect as expected, with little or no movement between the hand and the outer skin of the gloves.

In the freezer test they had the lowest temperature difference, showing they did the best at retaining heat. But the waterproofing test was a mixed bag - the left glove kept all water out and prevented the hand from feeling cold while submerged, but the right glove began to allow water in and by the end of the test the hand was completely wet.

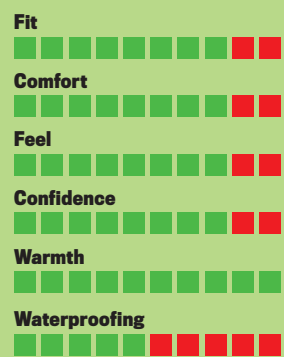
'The Oxfords did the best at retaining heat'

VERDICT
A great performance, but they were let down by only one of the gloves being waterproof.

BENCH TEST

Water retained	449ml
Temperature loss	13.5°C

THE SCORES



Total 47/60

THE FACTS

- Material** Goat leather
- Membrane** Dry2Dry
- Insulation** PrimaLoft
- Knuckle protection** TPU
- CE rating** 1 KP
- Visor wipe** ✓
- Touchscreen compatible** X
- Dry weight** 294g
- Wet weight** 743g

ARMR Kumaji 3.0 £49.99

New gloves from established brand

www.oxfordproducts.com

ARMR is now a sub-brand of Oxford Products, and as such this new glove has been developed using the company's experience and know-how. It has a reasonably weighty outer layer in 600D nylon and a chunky feel to it, suggesting it should be fairly warm - particularly using Thinsulate.

Putting them on is easy, and once on they feel snug and fit well. The thumbs are slightly long, and the left index finger feels longer than the rest of the fingers and caught on the clutch lever a couple of times. But the lining is nice and no seams are apparent.

The cuffs are fastened with a drawstring, which is easy to do up and release, and they will easily go over or under jacket cuffs depending on your preference.

Confidence is good, with solid TPU knuckle armour, padding on the fingers and two areas on the heel of the palm and the base of the thumb. There's a visor wipe on the left index finger, and both hands' index finger and thumb operated my iPhone with a screen protector.

On the bike, feel was pretty good - better than expected with the relatively bulky nature of the glove - and

comfort remained high with no seams nor annoying sections when using the controls. Articulation was good, as was connection with the bike, and there was no feeling of clamminess.

The Kumajis maintained internal temperature well in the freezer test - recording the second-lowest drop across the test. Similarly, in the waterproofing test, they kept both hands dry. They also prevented the hands from feeling too cold, suggesting the waterproofing layer is on the outside of the insulation as opposed to a membrane next to the skin.

'They prevented hands from feeling too cold'

THE FACTS

Material	600D nylon, goat leather palm, Amara overlay
Membrane	Dryguard
Insulation	Thinsulate
Knuckle protection	TPU
CE rating	1 KP
Visor wipe	✓
Touchscreen compatible	✓
Dry weight	251g
Wet weight	579g

BENCH TEST

Water retained	328ml
Temperature loss	13.7°C

THE SCORES

Fit	★★★★★★☆☆
Comfort	★★★★★★☆☆
Feel	★★★★★★☆☆
Confidence	★★★★★★☆☆
Warmth	★★★★★★☆☆
Waterproofing	★★★★★★☆☆

Total **49/60**



SOLID FOUNDATION
Now owned by Oxford Products, the ARMR gloves have been designed using the company's experience.

▼ Winter gloves have a number of mutually-exclusive requirements

‘Building a good winter glove is no mean feat’

- SUB-£100 WINTER GLOVES -

THE *RIDE* VERDICT

A clear winner – and a huge bargain to boot

The main requirement of winter gloves is to keep your hands warm and dry – and the ARMR Kumaji 3.0s do that brilliantly. Their combination of warmth and dryness, coupled with more-than-acceptable fit and feel, make them worthy of a Best Buy triangle. And at less than £50, they’re great value.

In a close second, the Knox Storms and Oxford Hamiltons scored the same marks. The Storms kept our hands dry and warmth was very good, but came at the price of bulkiness and reduced feel. The Oxfords offered excellent feel and the best warmth, but one glove allowed water in. But based on each doing different things well, both deserve a Recommended triangle.

NEXT MONTH...

Portable compressors are put under pressure



RIDE
MAKES
BEST BUY

ARMR Kumaji 3.0
£49.99
BEST BUY

Totally waterproof, second-best warmth in our testing, and reasonable fit, comfort and feel. A great all-round proposition and great value, too.



RIDE
MAKES
RECOMMENDED

Oxford Hamilton
£69.99
RECOMMENDED

The best performer when it came to warmth in our testing, with great fit, feel and confidence. Let down by allowing water into one of the gloves.



RIDE
MAKES
RECOMMENDED

Knox Storm
£99.99
RECOMMENDED

Another glove that remained totally dry with decent warmth and fit, but with a disconnected feel from the bike’s controls.