

# Gear selection

It's not just tribalism that makes different cyclists dress differently. We asked seven different CTC cyclists what clothes they'd choose and why

**W**hat not to wear is easy: denim-look lycra. What to wear depends on the cycling you'll be doing. Different tribes of cyclists dress differently for reasons of both fashion and function. Fashion, because consciously or not it nails your colours to the mast as belonging to a certain sub-group; and function, because the reason a clothing combination becomes popular is because it works well for given kind of cycling or bike type.

Typically you'll build up your cycling wardrobe by a process of accretion – a jersey here, some shorts there – as you find what works for you. But once you've gone through that process, you'll know your priorities for future purchases.

We asked a group of CTC cyclists to equip themselves for their favoured form of cycling, and to explain what they chose and why. We've focused on clothing for better weather. Clothes were borrowed rather than bought, but the proviso for all participants was that they had to 'spend'

their budget as if it were their own money. You won't agree with all their choices, but we're hoping it will prove more useful than a review of, say, ten very similar jackets.

We used the CTC mail order shop ([www.ctcshop.org.uk](http://www.ctcshop.org.uk)) to source all products, because it has a huge range that all CTC members get a discount on (adjusted prices shown in brackets); because we *are* CTC; and because it was much easier to organise this way. The decisions behind each choice will be equally valid wherever you shop.



## 1 Sportive cycling John Storms

I went for height-of-summer stuff, more white than darker colours. There's a couple of sportives and a CTC Challenge ride coming up and I'm hoping the sun will shine in August. I would still include a gilet and arm warmers as it can still be single digits first thing in the morning and the UK can throw rain and wind at you even in the best months of the year.

The jersey is the real highlight of this kit. It has a tighter, race type cut with full length zip, a zippered pocket in addition to three other pockets, large open mesh under the pits and also band of rubber material around the inside of the bottom so it doesn't ride up. The shorts have mesh across the bibs, which again speak to summer conditions and fit well all around. The gloves are slip on, no straps, light and thin – all you need for hot days. The gilet could be useful year round. It is seam sealed and not a thin, flimsy showerproof material. A bit of reflectivity is also nice.

If I were spending just £100, it would be difficult not to keep the jersey although the shoes are good value at £79.00 – many are double or triple this price. These fitted well right out of the box and have a full carbon sole which is stiff and efficient.

### John's sportive kit list: £368.11 (plus bike)

- Giro Monza Helmet silver £54.99 (£48.39)
- Topsport Team cotton cap £5.40 (£4.75)
- DHB Triple Pro sunglasses £37.99 (£33.43)
- Giro Zero gloves £24.99 (£21.99)
- DHB Knowle S/S Jersey £69.99 (£61.59)
- DHB Wickham Event gilet £89.99 (£79.19)
- DHB Bib Shorts – black £35.99 (£31.67)
- DeFeet Levitator socks £8.99 (£7.91)
- DHB RC Carbon road shoes £89.99 (£79.19)
- Bike: Battaglin C12 Ultegra Plus £2,100 (£1,848)



## 2 Fixed-wheel commuting Rosanna Downes

You'll spot fixed-wheel riders wearing all sorts of strange and wonderful outfits, especially in London. But the 'fakenger' look, imitating a cycle messenger's appearance, was the original fashion: black cycling jacket; black cycling shoes; cycling cap; and the ubiquitous messenger bag.

It's not just about the look, however. Performance is important too. These riders have often built up their own bikes (sometimes with colour co-ordinated components); they ride everywhere; they wear their cycling gear to the pub. So they're looking for style and quality. Both can be seen in the Sugoi Walleroo base layer: not cheap, but being 100% Merino wool, it feels lovely to wear.

Women's mountain bike shoes are often a bit clumpy, so the DHB M1 MTB shoes were a pleasant surprise. The price tag is even more pleasant. Soft, stretchy material and detachable liner meant the Pearl Izumi Elite Versa Capri Pant was really comfortable, although they turned out to be a bit long for me. The Chrome Citizen messenger bag looks great – the seat-belt buckle is a nice piece of hardware. Comfortable, adjustable, and you can fit plenty in it – certainly if you're not actually a bike messenger!

What I'd keep for £100: I've always found Gore Bike Wear's women's kit to be a cut above most brands, in terms of fit and performance, and I wasn't disappointed by the Windstopper softshell (£87.99). Perfect for cool mornings and evenings, it's ideal 'stylish commuter' gear.

### Rosie's commuter kit list: £366.91

- Sugoi Walleroo baselayer £58.00 (£51.04)
- DHB M1 MTB Shoes £49.99 (£43.99)
- Gore Softshell Windstopper Jacket £99.99 (£87.99)
- Pearl Izumi Elite Versa Capri pant £67.99 (£59.83)
- Chrome Citizen messenger bag £129.99 (£114.39)
- Assos hat £10.99 (£9.67)

## 3 Touring Mark Waters



When cycle touring you can be on your bike for extended periods, so it's more important that the clothing worn is 'fit-for-purpose' and comfortable to wear. As you'll be carrying limited amount of clothing with

you, what you have needs to be versatile, particularly for a place like northern Europe where the weather on a two-week tour can change radically.

The answer is layering and the use of quality, technical fabrics. A breathable, waterproof jacket has to be up there, followed by a wicking base layer to enable sweat to escape from the skin. Padded shorts are another 'must', although some seem to manage without them.

If I had only £100 to spend on clothes, I would get a pair of padded shorts, a couple of base layers, a budget waterproof (which would not be breathable at that price) and a baseball cap. White is impractical for touring unless you take a lot of washing powder. So I'd get the black versions of the gloves and socks I'm pictured with.

Clothing needs to be appropriate for the prevailing weather. In cooler weather the tights and jacket would be suitable. On a hot summer days they would not. The padded DHB Merston tights were comfortable. The DHB Southsea jacket was waterproof, with taped seams and a good high neck. However, being a budget jacket it was easy to overheat and sweat in. Whilst the DHB triple lens sunglasses were very good looking, they ended up not suiting the shape of my face so I'd try a different pair.

### Mark's touring kit list: £159.23

- DHB sunglasses £37.99 (£33.43)
- DHB Southsea jacket £55.99 (£49.27)
- DeFeet Levitator Socks £8.99 (£7.91)
- Giro Zero Gloves £17.99 (£15.83)
- DHB waist tights £36.99 (£32.55)
- Craft base layer £23.00 (£20.24)





## 4 Off-road riding Holger Schiller

For riding either a 'cross bike or a mountain bike off-road I would prioritise a good pair of baggy shorts. These Gore ones are perfect. They have lots of pockets, fit as described, and the padded liner is comfortable.

I also think a helmet is important off-road. The Giro Ionos is a model I've used in the past and get on with. It is light, fits well and the padding is removable and washable. It is, however, an eye-watering £126.

Glasses are also important off-road, where debris and different types of light can be challenging. Of the three lenses supplied the orange lens could be very useful. I'm not such a fan of the rainbow mirrored lens, but the other mirrored lens is fine. These are about a third of the price of a pair of Oakleys, so losing or breaking them would be less painful than that level of investment.

I hesitate to spend a lot on shoes for use off-road, only because they take a beating. These Northwaves at just over £60.00 would be fine. They fit well and have a couple of studs at the front for grip off the bike if you want them. If I were spending just £100, I would prioritise the shorts, jersey and socks.

### Holger's off-road kit list: £315.86 (plus bike)

Gore Plaster Ultra II baggy short £54.99 (£48.39)

DHB Fichdean long sleeve £41.99 (£36.95)

Giro Ionos helmet £143.99 (£126.71)

Northwave Spike shoe £69.99 (£61.59)

DHB triple lens sunglasses £37.99 (£33.43)

DeFeet Levitator socks £9.99 (£8.79)

Bike: Focus Mares Expert Cyclo Cross £1200 (£1,056)



## 5 Mountain biking Andy Hawes

Comfortable shorts are essential. I was pleasantly surprised with these Sombrio Rev baggies. The fit is good, they're made from a quality hard-wearing fabric, and the ventilation is good too. There's an adjustable waist band with two Velcro tabs for waist adjustment, and they're laser-cut too! The deep pockets are useful for stowing things, and there's even a handy 'trail pass' holder.

It can be difficult getting comfortable cycling shoes if you've got wide feet, as I have, but even though these DHB M1 MTB shoes were slightly narrow for me they were comfortable enough once I'd adjusted the straps. And they've very reasonably priced. Wool socks still keep your feet warm when damp, though are perhaps better for autumn than summer.

My main priority with shades is to keep the flies and flying debris at bay. With a nice a nice snug fit, these shades do the trick without looking like laboratory safety specs. There are three swappable lenses for different

light condition.

I'd always budget for a helmet for mountain biking. It doesn't have to be super light or super expensive; it's all about adjustment and getting the right fit. This one is easy to adjust. Once on, it's comfortable and well ventilated. I particularly liked the detachable Coolmax padding, which you can wash to keep it fresh.

Jerseys don't need to be silly expensive either. This DHB one is breathable and easily ventilated via its ¾ length zip. Some mountain biking jerseys lack pockets, but I find them useful – and this one has three. Cut and styling are decent enough as well.

### Andy's MTB kit list: £216.88 (plus bike)

Sombrio Rev baggy shorts £59.50 (£52.36)

DHB M1 MTB shoes £49.99 (£43.99)

DHB Earnley jersey £33.99 (£29.91)

Met Kaos soft touch helmet £64.99 (£57.19)

DHB triple lens sunglasses £37.99 (£33.43)

Bike: Focus black Forest £1000 (£880)





## 6 Road bike commuting Grace Wong

Finding cycle clothing for women, particularly for commuting, can be a challenge. It seemed I could have any colour so long as it was black. Fit was unpredictable too, which isn't uncommon with cycling gear.

The Bspoke Richmond Women's Casual Trouser had some nicely thought out details such as cycling specific articulated knees, zippered pockets, Velcro hems and Teflon stain/water resistant fabric. However, sizing across the waist and length was on the small side.

The Sportful Hot Pack Women's jacket folds up into the palm of your hand, but was short in the body and too baggy elsewhere. Nice features in the soft feel waist and wrist piping and extra length in the back and arms for riding low on the bike. The fabric repels water and there are nicely designed air vents across the back and to the side of the arms. With a closer cut, this waterproof jacket would be my main item if I had only £100 to spend.

To get red gloves, I had to pick the men's small size which were a bit loose. On a positive note, the Sugoi HOV utility shirt in technical fabric wicked away perspiration with a comfortable fit. It looked fine off the bike too.

The DHB Elsted 30 Litre backpack has a padded back and straps, plus reflective piping. The practical zipped compartments separate contents. A heavier duty fabric with a more robust zip construction would be welcome improvements to what is already a good, and good value, commuter bag.

### Grace's commuter kit list: £205.90

**Sportful Hot Pack Jacket** £75.00 (£66.00)

**Sportful Glove** £17.50 (£15.40)

**Bspoke Richmond trouser** £61.49 (£54.11)

**Sugoi Utility shirt** £42.00 (£36.96)

**DHB 30L rucksack** £37.99 (£33.43)



## 7 Folding bike commuting Simon Fearon

To commute as simply as possible means not having lots of clothing to worry about, probably just a few pieces. Early morning starts mean wearing long sleeves or a jacket much of the year.

The DHB Finchdean jersey isn't so much a jersey as it is a winter-weight jacket, fleece lined and also windproof Windtex material. Just a light base layer underneath and you are out the door. For a longer commute or temps much above 16-18 degrees this probably isn't suitable. As a piece to wear for shorter trips to the station and from the station to work it has a lot going for it. It's well thought out in design. The zipper is covered at the top and bottom, there's a chest pocket for convenient access to rail tickets, keys, money etc. and a zippered pocket at the back in addition to three others. Fluorescent yellow and reflective panels on front and back isn't for everyone, but I choose this rather than a hi-viz vest.

Running shoes are generally more comfortable than proper cycling shoes. For short distances and walking across platforms around a typical cycle/rail/cycle type journey, that's what I wear most of the time. These are light Nike Lunar Glides.

The shorts are baggy type as I don't want to wear lycra on the train and the padding in the shorts is appreciated. These could easily be used for all sorts of cycling with pockets and velcro size adjustments at the bottom of the leg to keep them from turning into sails. I have a nice road bike helmet, so this less expensive helmet for commuting is all I need.

### Simon's commuter kit list: £233.58 (plus bike)

**Met Camaleonte helmet** £39.99 (£35.19)

**DHB Finchdean Fluo Edition jersey** £99.99 (£87.99)

**CTC casual shorts from Impsport** £40.00

**Nike Lunar Glide Plus SS10 running shoes** £80.00 (£70.40)

**Bike: Oyama Metropolitan** £349.95 (£307.96)

