

# BAGGY SHORTS

Don't fancy lycra for mountain biking, touring or commuting? Journalist **Guy Kesteven** and daughter Honor review four baggy alternatives

**BAGGY SHORTS** are a popular riding choice for several reasons. They're better suited to self-conscious folks who don't fancy flaunting it all in figure-hugging lycra, being much less obtrusive and socially acceptable when you're wandering about off the bike. As well as increasing modesty, baggy shorts usually increase carrying capacity with a selection of pockets. The outer shell can also increase protection if you're scuffing through bushes off-road, and help shrug off wind and wetness. The latest high-performance fabrics, cycling-specific fit, and features like vents and seamless gussets means that teaming them with a lightweight liner (or your favourite lycra shorts) still keeps them comfortable for long days in the saddle.

## POCKETS

Cargo capacities range from map pockets and a plethora of other zipped, studded and key-clipped stashes to performance shorts with a minimalist single key/loose change pocket. Pockets add weight and cost, however, and treating your shorts like sherpas can mean a bunch of keys in your crotch or a multitool embedded in your leg if you fall off.

## INNER SHORTS

Inner shorts can be: sewn into the outer fabric; detachable with press-studs; or wholly separate. Loose liners mean less washing as the outer can do several rides while the inners get refreshed; they tend to fit better too. Selling separate also means you can use your favourite lycra shorts under a baggy outer.



## FABRIC

Tough cotton or heavyweight synthetic shells are durable and offer more protection from wind or scuffs but are more noticeable when you're pedalling, especially when wet and heavy. Lightweight synthetic fabrics improve pedalling performance and dry quickly but are generally not as durable and protective, and stuff in pockets will be more obvious.

## PROTECTION

As well as the conventional or lightly water-repellent proofed shorts here, most manufacturers now produce weatherproof shorts, which sound a daft idea but actually work brilliantly for British weather. This can vary from a splash panel on the seat, through lightweight, stretch Windstopper fabrics to full Gore-Tex waterproof shorts.

## FIT

Correct fit is vital with a heavier short. A high back will keep you warm and protected when you're bent over but beware a busy fastener area at the front that can dig in after a decent lunch. Length can vary from daringly buttock grazing to below the knee – check inseam dimensions before buying.

## YOUR THOUGHTS?

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**1 GORE BIKE WEAR ELEMENT**

£74.99 [goreapparel.co.uk](http://goreapparel.co.uk)

Gore's casual cut, 'leisure oriented' Element shorts are high performance kit. The fabric is light and has a multi-directional stretch that makes them unnoticeable when you're pedalling. There's enough stretch in the high, double press-stud and Velcro-closed, belt-looped waist to keep your back warm without digging into your belly. They don't get heavy with water or sweat and they dry quickly. They wear better than the light weight suggests, pack down small and wash well. Detailing is excellent, with subtle reflectivity and extra darts in the corners of the front hand pockets to stop things falling out when you sit down. Price is high considering the Inner Tights Pro+ inner shorts are extra (£44.99). Green, blue and black. Sizes S-XXL (Element Lady XS-XXL).

● **High performance, cleverly detailed, lightweight shorts with great optional liners – at a price**



**2 HOY VULPINE SAITAMA TRAIL SHORTS**

£54.99 [vulpine.cc](http://vulpine.cc)

These immaculately-tailored shorts are the 'civvy' option in the new Hoy collection from Vulpine. Cut just above the knee, with belt loops and subtle logos, they won't broadcast that you're a cyclist. Yet they work well on the bike. The diamond gusset extends down the inside leg on each side to keep seams from rubbing, and the back is cut high for extra coverage when leaning forward. While they're quite stiff new, the 98% ripstop-cotton mix soon softens into a lovely smooth fabric, and they're durable if your rough-stuff involves brambles. The Merino Boxer liner shorts (£45) they're designed to team up with have just enough pad for reasonable mileage but not so much they force you into a cowboy waddle. Like all cotton and merino clothing, they take an age to dry once wet. Black only. Sizes S-XXL (women's XS-XL).

● **Durable and comfortably rideable casual shorts. Not for wet or sweaty days**



**3 ENDURA WOMEN'S HUMMVEE**

£49.99 [endurasport.com](http://endurasport.com)

Endura make hard-working clothing at a keen price. The Hummvee's nylon outer is super durable without being too heavy even when wet, and it dries reasonably quickly. The waistband has a fast-wicking liner to reduce sweatiness and rubbing. The fabric is Teflon-coated to shrug off water (until it eventually washes out) and the seat is splashproof. The multi-panel cut makes up for the lack of stretch in the material and a lightweight webbing belt is included for refining/reinforcing the elasticated, press-stud, hook and zipped fly. Two small zipped leg pockets are well placed so they don't flap or bounce when pedalling. A liner is included. While the pad is relatively thin (8mm) and less mileage-friendly than the Gore's, it's better than most at this price. Black or grey. Sizes XS-XXL (men's XS-XXXL, also green or camo).

● **Extremely tough, feature-loaded shorts at a great price. Included liner suits shorter rides**



**4 GIRO WOMEN'S RIDE TAILORED OVERSHORT**

£79.99 [zyro.co.uk](http://zyro.co.uk)

The Ride Tailored overshorts are properly smart-casual thanks to a nylon/spandex mix that looks like suit material but with a four-way stretch that gives mobility on the bike. The simple cut ensures they hang cleanly when you're wandering about but includes a seamless gusset strip that runs from hem to hem to avoid chafing. The Overshort shifts sweat quickly and dries fast. The hand pockets are shallow, however, and no pocket is zipped. The women's 'Boy Undershirt' (£59.99) is a very comfortable and stretchy merino wool mix. The moulded Cytech Tri Chamois pad is more comfortable on long rides than its thin density would suggest, but while it still feels snug if gets damp, the merino does take longer to dry than synthetics. Grey or black. Sizes XS-XXL (men's S-XXL).

● **Smart, tailored shorts with optional high-performance liners, although not cheap**