Skin-tight lycra isn’t the only option for saddle-proofing your posterior. Lauren Brooks tests four pairs of padded pants for women.

Handy for commuters, bikepackers, tourers, and mountain bikers, padded pants provide extra saddle comfort without the not-always-flattering look of clingy lycra. They’re great if you’re self conscious about your shape and also for off-the-bike situations where lycra looks a little odd.

You can wear padded pants under normal clothes, including dresses and skirts, as well as under baggy cycling shorts. They’re less obtrusive than wearing lycra shorts underneath (especially bib shorts) and they pack smaller when not worn.

Often made from blended fabrics, padded pants wick away sweat where that job is most important for pH balance. The key issue with them is the padding itself. Too much and you may as well be wearing your usual chamois. Too little and your bum won’t thank you for it.

This test is of padded pants for women. There are men’s versions of all of them except the VeloVixen pants, although the Altura Tempo Undershorts for men are a very different style.

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