

Reviews

Gear up

COMPONENTS, KIT, AND MEDIA SELECTED
AND REVIEWED BY BIKE JOURNALISTS AND CYCLING UK STAFF

Put to the test

Is there a product that you think needs reviewing?

Write to: *Cycle*, PO Box 313, Scarborough, YO12 6WZ

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Pros & cons

- + Good turn-by-turn navigation
- + Loads of features
- Somewhat unintuitive



Garmin Edge 530

£259.99 (device only) garmin.com

GPS computers used to come in two flavours: little ones with lots of numbers for training and racing, and bigger ones with proper mapping for navigation. Garmin's Edge 530 blurs the line.

It's fundamentally a training/racing unit with the facility to capture and display a bewildering range of data. But it has full Garmin mapping built in. As well as turn-by-turn directions with a colour map, you can plan routes on the unit, and it will re-route you mid-ride

if you go wrong. There's also a version with Trailforks mapping data installed; see trailforks.com for an idea of what it entails. That one costs £319.99.

I tested the basic unit, which doesn't come with Trailforks data, nor with sensors for heart-rate, cadence, etc.

I've used a Garmin Edge 500 for years but found the 530 unintuitive. There are lots of menus to navigate using multiple buttons. Probably the Edge 530 is easier to use if you can install the Garmin Connect

App on your phone. My iPhone 5 is too old to run this app.

Once you climb the Edge 530's learning curve, however, you're rewarded with endless vistas of data. It'll log everything you expect, such as speed, time in HR zone, and lots of things you wouldn't: time in air when mountain biking; heat and altitude acclimation... There's even a bike alarm.

I found it easy to create a route in Komoot on my laptop, then transfer it to the Garmin and follow it, perhaps because I've done that before on an Edge 500. The Edge 530's navigation is much, much better – although scrolling around the map using buttons is tiresome. My main issue with the Edge 530, excellent though it is, is that it feels like data overload. The Edge 530 should probably be your second or third GPS computer, not your first. ●

Dan Joyce

Other options



WAHOO ELEMNT ROAM £299.99

Easier to use than the Edge 530, by all accounts, and the app works with iOS10. Not as fully featured in terms of navigation options.

wahoofitness.com



LEZYNE MEGA XL GPS £180

Great battery life and offers offline maps, but your linked smartphone is required for real-time features such as mid-ride rerouting and alerts.

lezyne.com

Verdict

The Edge 530 is an excellent navigation-ready GPS computer that's packed with features. But you need to be an enthusiastic data cruncher, fairly technically savvy, and have a modern phone to get the most out of it.



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Pros & cons
 + More comfortable
 + Easier to absorb bumps
 – Less steering & climbing leverage

On-One Geoff handlebar

£21 planetx.co.uk



As the name cheekily implies, this handlebar is a budget copy of Jeff Jones's H-Bar Loop. Jones designed his handlebar for his unorthodox rigid mountain bikes, which have a slacker seat angle and shorter reach than most. Sitting up and back more takes the weight off your hands, as does the bar's 45° back-sweep, and the change in grip angle rotates your arms so your elbows come in closer to your hips. It's more comfortable, since your arms aren't propping you up, and it's a better orientation for absorbing bumps. The extra bar loop, meanwhile, provides more hand positions, plus extra places to fit luggage or accessories.

On-One's 720mm-wide Geoff bar gives you these features at a fraction of the price of a Jones bar. It's made from two pieces of plain gauge aluminium alloy tubing welded together. More tubing means more weight; at 591g, it's twice that of a comparable flat bar and still 150g

more than mine with its Cane Creek Ergo bar ends included. The back-sweep is the same as the Jones bar: 45°.

I fitted the Geoff to my Carver Gnarvester, currently set up for winter as a rigid singlespeed. The hand positions on the front loop came in useful on tarmac. You can tuck your shoulders in a bit (hands on sides) or go full TT (hands in centre). Either really helps for riding at pace or into a headwind.

Off-road it's the rearward hand positions that are more useful. With long enough grips (or bar tape), there's 215mm to hold onto. Because the bar has a 45° sweep, moving your hands in and out changes your sitting angle as well as your steering leverage. Powering along easy trails or uphill, you can hold near the cross piece and lean forward. On technical descents, you can hold near the ends to shift your c-of-g back and take your weight off the fork. It's ideal for soaking bumps on a rigid bike, although

the lighter loaded front wheel inevitably has less traction.

It takes a while to adjust to the handling off-road. The elbows-in position doesn't give as much steering leverage as a wide, elbows-out flat bar. You need to finesse your way through technical sections, steering with hands and hips rather than leading with your shoulders. There's less leverage when climbing out of the saddle too, so the Geoff bar better suits those who sit and spin than those who stand and stomp. That was a deal-breaker for me. ●

Dan Joyce

Verdict

Comfortable and versatile handlebar for bikepacking, rough-stuff touring, and rigid mountain biking. At this price, worth buying as an experiment.

Other options



ALPKIT LOVE MUD CONFUCIOUS
 £34.99

760mm flat bar with a slight (9°) sweep and a loop on the front. Fewer useful hand positions but more traditional handling.

alpkit.com



JONES H-BAR BUTTED LOOP ALUMINIUM
 £140

The Jones version has butted tubing and is 710mm wide. It's available in plain gauge tubing for £92, and in titanium and carbon for much more.

keppeddalling.co.uk,
jonesbikes.com



Pros & cons
 + Suit wider tyres
 + No frame eyelets required
 – Velcro fitting on front

SKS

Speedrocker mudguards

£49.99 sks-germany.com



SKS Speedrockers are designed for gravel bikes, wide-tired road bikes and the like – bikes that may lack frame fittings or clearance for conventional guards. Each has stays for stability but everything attaches with straps – to the fork, seatstays, and seat tube.

Fitting is fairly easy. The front guard doesn't run under the fork crown; it's in two pieces and attaches either side. The rear goes under the seatstay bridge, with the tip telescoping forward or back to fasten at the seat tube on different-sized frames. While you'll ideally want some clearance under the seatstay bridge, you could fit the guard over the top instead. I didn't need to do this, but did thread the guard through the bike's rack.

The front fitting is a little less obvious and uses velcro straps instead of rubber ones. I'm not keen on this: I have had velcro straps on frame bags clog with mud and lose their 'stickiness'. Time will tell with these. The fork straps are long, presumably to cope with 'aero' carbon fork legs, and a good 5-6cm of velcro was left flapping on the Bombtrack test bike. Wrap them so the ends fasten on the side away from the spokes. You could cut them short, although this isn't specifically recommended by SKS. The rear guard is fixed by rubber straps and is quicker to fit. If you want to keep the bike's paintwork pristine, tape the frame and fork before fitting the guards.

Both front and rear guards are supported by a single pair

of stays. These are adjustable for length via a small Allen bolt. The stays prevent the guards wobbling as much as other strap-on guards, although there was still some vibration from the front guard, particularly the section in front of the fork.

The Speedrockers are designed for 700C tyres no wider than 42mm. The bike I fitted them to has 29x2in tyres, however, and splash protection was still good. The front guard is long enough to keep most spray off your feet, although the rear guard is only long enough to keep the rider clean, not anyone cycling closely behind. They weigh just over 400g. ● **Roland Seber**

Other options

TOPEAK DEFENDER M1/XC11 29" £45.99
 Designed for mountain bikes, these mudguards will fit most gravel bikes too, but the rear one may obstruct a seatpost bag.
extrauk.co.uk



CRUD ROADRACER MK3 £34.99
 Suitable for tyres up to 38mm wide, these will fit many gravel bikes. They go on and off easily without tools.
crudproducts.com



Verdict
 Oversized mudguards with an easy fit and good splash protection. Great for bikepacking, but a longer rear is needed for group riding.