Hip packs

Bumbags were what many off-road riders use before hydration packs appeared. Now they’re back. Katherine Moore tests four

Hip packs, bumbags or (for Americans) fanny packs – whatever you call them, they’re gaining popularity among gravel riders, mountain bikers and bikepackers. More compact and lightweight than a backpack and offering more storage than many smaller on-bike bags, hip packs are being used for day rides and multi-day tours alike.

Most have room to stash your tools and spares, snacks and extra layers. This means you can ride in a technical T-shirt rather than needing a cycling jersey for pocket storage, yet still keep your valuables on your person rather than on the bike, which can be handy when going into shops and cafés.

Many mountain bikers have made the switch from rucksacks to hip packs as they offer a more lightweight and compact alternative, which can also help keep you cooler during the hotter, sweatier summer months.

While it can be tempting to opt for the biggest hip pack possible, there’s a balance to be had. Overloading a hip pack can put extra strain on your back, just as carrying a heavy rucksack might. If you plan on riding with a camera, a hip pack can be a good place to keep it stowed and safe, and can help to keep it dry during rain showers.

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