

# 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 you'd like us to test? Write to: [Cycle, Cycling UK, Parklands, Railton Rd, Guildford, GU2 9JX](#) or [editor@cyclinguk.org](mailto:editor@cyclinguk.org)

### Pros & cons

- + Smart Lever worked on all tyres
- + Better Bike Lever did most
- Both cost more



**K GARBUTT BETTER BIKE LEVER**  
£13.50 [ebay.co.uk](https://www.ebay.co.uk)



**BICYCLE INNOVATIONS SMART LEVER**  
£22.50 [smartlever.uk](https://www.smartlever.uk)

## Other options



### VAR RP-42500 £9.00

Cycle has previously tested and rated this (April/May 2022). It combines a standard pair of removal levers and a bead-jack tool for refitting. [vartools.uk](https://www.vartools.uk)



### SCHWALBE TYRE LEVERS £4.99

Set of three conventional levers that are both thin and strong. Will hook behind the spokes when the bead is levered off.

[schwalbetires.com](https://www.schwalbetires.com)

## Better Bike Lever & Smart Lever

Two ways to deal with tighter-fitting tyres

**T**he Better Bike Lever and Smart Lever are designed to make tyres easier to remove and refit. Tight tyres have become common in recent years due to tubeless tyres and rims.

The Better Bike Lever is 3D-printed from carbon fibre. The set's two levers look like regular tyre levers but interlocking spurs act as a pivot to make getting the first inch or two of bead off the rim more easily, after which they are used rather like regular levers. They can also be hooked together to use as a reseating tool. The Bigger Better Bike Lever (£16.27) is the same but longer; it's intended for wider MTB tyres.

The Smart Lever consists of tough plastic attachments bolted

onto the end of a stainless steel arm. A plastic removal hook pushes under the tyre bead in the usual manner but the bolt allows the arm to pivot, so you can push along the length of the lever, using your effort more effectively. At the other end of the lever is a refitting shoe and roller. The shoe hooks over and anchors on the rim while the roller helps push the bead over the rim edge. A Bead Lever attachment (£12.50, pictured above the Smart Lever in the photo) converts the Smart Lever into an unseating tool for stuck beads.

I tried both levers on hard-to-fit road tyres (such as Continental's GP5000) and stubborn off-road tyres (Schwalbe Marathon Plus

MTB). These tyres had sometimes defeated conventional levers.

The Smart Lever operation was slick. Removal worked much as the website's video shows. Replacement was similarly smooth. With tougher tyres it helped to work the bead a little before removal or refitting, and to get a bit of bodyweight behind the tool if required.

The Better Bike Lever generally succeeded in removing the tight tyres but was more fiddly, with three separate parts to manage (two levers and an Allen key). I couldn't get the Better Bike Lever to refit the Marathon Pluses, although they did fit other tyres.

One tyre I tested had a very, very tight bead. The Smart Lever's Bead Lever attachment found purchase on this, after careful working of the tyre side to side. I couldn't get sufficient grip with either the Better Bike Lever or the Bigger Better Bike Lever. ●

**Richard Peace**

## Verdict

Both products are more effective than standard tyre levers but the Smart Lever, in combination with the Bead Lever, is next level in terms of dealing with super stubborn tyres. The only downside is the extra weight (a few tens of grammes) over standard plastic levers.

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