



Mountain Biking bits

by
Rich Martin

When it comes to mountain biking there really is so much kit you just couldn't simply live without. Obviously you need a bike and then there is your helmet, gloves and glasses and.....well, what exactly????

We spend 95% of the year biking. When you do something day in day out, you quickly abandon the kit you don't need and equip yourself with kit that is practicable, has more than once use and is light.



We carry just plain water for drinking: no one is allergic to it, it's good for washing dirt away from wounds and, finally, the hydration systems or bottles don't go mouldy.

For mechanical problems we carry the mandatory multi tool and spare tyre tubes plus 5 other precious, lightweight and cheap items.

- an empty toothpaste tube
- some zip ties (cable ties)
- a role of gaffer tape
- some power links
- a bag of spare bolts, washers, nuts and clips.

If you slash the side of your tyre exposing the inner tube then using the gaffer tape & toothpaste tube to seal the tyre will let you continue, no worries. If you are running disc brakes (not conventional v-brakes that use the rim to brake), then simply add a few zip ties and you can hold it in "brace like" - a "bombproof" fix.

Zip ties can also be used to make a temporary chain device. If you haven't got a replaceable gear hanger (maybe get one!!) the toothpaste tube, tape & ties can be used to make a temporary chain device to repair the damage and ride on.

For broken chains Power links are fantastic (worth their very light weight in gold). This link makes what used to be a fiddley time-consuming horrible repair almost a pleasure to fix. They fit any chain and are as strong as any other link on the bike.

Gaffer tape can be used for SOOO.... many fixes. One of my recent repairs was using the tape and a wooden stick to repair broken handlebars.

Finally, when it comes to mechanics our little bag of "goodies" which is basically a bag of spare bolts, nuts, washers and clips is invaluable.

When it comes to repairs a good repair kit will get you home, a REALLY GOOD kit will let you continue your day's riding and finish your route.

On our guiding exploits, our First Aid Kits (which we always carry) contain a condom and a sanitary towel.

In practice these all work really well.

The condom: it's not in case we get lucky but for when you have a rider who has fallen off and received a nasty gravel rash, which is all wet and gooey. Snip off the end of the condom and SLIDE it onto the arm. You can continue to ride without fear of getting dust or dirt in the wound. Once back at base, slide it back off and let the air to it.

Sanitary pads are easily available and are fantastic at absorbing fluid. If you get them with wings they really help hold the dressing in place and combined with a bit of gaffer tape make a really secure dressing.

Alongside this we would always carry with us Buffs (thats a snood for us oldies - Ed.) for warmth, first aid & looking cool. If required, the bothy bag - when you need this baby, it's without doubt the Best bit of kit.

So there you have it, lots of kit we couldn't live without. Challenge your riding kit and see what you DO need and don't need. If you have a big bag you always find stuff to fill it with. ■



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