



**Grouptest**

# Padded pants

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



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Cycling UK's digital communications and media officer is a new-to-gravel cyclist who often complains of sore sit bones!

**H**andy 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.

## Details WHAT TO LOOK FOR

**1 Comfort**  
Look for breathable fabrics, such as nylon and polyester, with some stretch in them (from a percentage of elastane/lycra). The longer the ride, the more padding you may need.

**2 Sizing**  
Check the size guide against your measurements. Too small and they will roll down or dig in. Too big and they will move around and cause rubbing. I found all four pants here true to size.

**3 Care**  
If you're touring, blended fabrics that include merino wool, polyester or bamboo

are quick-drying, odour-resistant, and will withstand frequent washing. I found that all pairs tested dried outdoors within a couple of hours.

**4 Style and fit**  
The smaller the style of pants, the less bulky and the less conspicuous they are (if that's what you're looking for). The longer the padding in the front, the more comfortable the pants are for female anatomy.

**5 Durability**  
Look for strong seams. While some fabric stretchiness is good, more than about 4% elastane may result in overstretching long term.



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