

# CHROMAG PALMSKIN

£23.99

**SPECIFICATION** Weight: 101g • Colours: grey/red, black, blue/black • Diameter: 30mm • Length: 137mm total, 120mm grip Contact: hotlines-uk.com

If you're a rider who hates wearing gloves, or even seeks out the thinnest glove you can find, then the Palmskin is possibly the best grip for you. Chromag has developed it to provide a soft and supple hand feel that caresses the skin, rather than a chunky pattern that tears it to shreds. The simple longitudinal ribbing has a wavy pattern that clamps to the hand no matter the direction you twist. It helps disperse water and mud too; a quick squeeze purges the surface. Interestingly, despite appearing wafer-thin, the Palmskin turned out to be one of the most comfortable grips on test. That ribbing allows the hand to float above the handlebar a little better than most of the others. It's also the lightest grip on test at just over 100 grams. What makes this even more extraordinary is it comes with double alloy collars. The outer end cap creates a neat, teardrop-style bar end. The only issue being it likes to hold onto mud more than a full bar-end.



# DMR DEATHGRIP

£17.00 (standard) / £20.00 (race edition)

**SPECIFICATION** Weight: 117g (thick), 101g (thin) • Options: thick or thin diameter, flanged or no-flange, firm, soft or Race Edition compounds • Colours: black, camo, tango, red, fluo yellow, blue Diameter: thick 32mm (maximum), thin 30.5mm (maximum) Length: 133mm total, 118mm grip • Contact: upgradebikes.co.uk

I really like to create my own pizza, and I think Brendan Fairclough probably does as well, if his signature Deathgrip is anything to go by. It's like a checklist of all his favourite grip patterns all rolled into one tidy package. We've got an inboard ribbed/mushroom section creating a slightly larger diameter to ensure comfort and reassurance for your thumb and forefinger. The rest then features a diamond knurl with a waffle section aimed at giving your fingers extra purchase. We're fans of the flange too, but there's also a non-flange version available. And boy does this grip work! You instantly feel more in control and confident on the bike. Even in heavy rain the ribbed section manages to squeeze out water and enable the strongest part of your hand to keep clinging on. If that's not enough, the Deathgrip is also available in a super-sticky Race Edition compound, as well as two different diameters to suit almost every rider's needs.



# NS HOLDFAST

£19.99

**SPECIFICATION** Weight: 103g • Colours: black, green, blue, orange, oil slick • Diameter: 30mm • Length: 146mm total, 132mm grip • Contact: hotlines-uk.com

I'm a sucker for a good name and a bad tattoo, so the NS Holdfast grip had to be included in this test. Name aside, the Holdfast is marketed as the longest grip out there. And at 146mm we can't really argue with that. NS believes that wider handlebars need wider grips. That extra length lets you run your brake levers butted against the grip to keep your cockpit looking clean. In principle it's a great idea, but during testing I managed to find the downside. If, like me, you use the inner flange/collar as a cue for hand placement, then the end of the Holdfast extends a good 15mm further than a normal grip. When you ride in tight, wooded singletrack, it's amazing how many trees you 'find'. A single 3mm clamp holds things really tight, and at the other end a hard end cap protects your bars. It offers ample all-weather grip, but the lighter cushioning from its hexagonal pattern makes it more suitable for longer-travel bikes.



# ODI ELITE PRO

£26.99

**SPECIFICATION** Weight: 102g • Colours: black, graphite, red, blue, orange, green • Diameter: 32mm • Length: 129mm total, 113mm grip • Contact: ison-distribution.com

You know that claw-hand feeling you get at the end of a full day of riding? When even holding on becomes a chore, and every little bit of braking makes your muscles scream? Well, this latest ODI Elite Pro grip aims to conquer those issues. With a true 32mm diameter and a raised section for the palm it creates a super-cushioned grip that doesn't make it feel like you're holding a pencil. This soft compound is also complemented by a large waffle section underneath to improve finger grip, further decreasing the force you need to apply while holding on. ODI also puts more rubber under the palm area, effectively off-setting the grip to provide more cushioning where needed. To make things as comfortable as possible, the lockring has been smoothed off and a half flange has also been incorporated. The overall result is a brilliant grip. As long as you can live with one of the clamp bolts sitting at the top of the bar and the other at the bottom, the ODI Elite Pro comes highly recommended.



# RACE FACE GRIPPLER

£24.99

**SPECIFICATION** Weight: 112g • Options: 33mm or 30mm diameter • Colours: black, blue, gum, green, yellow, red, purple, magenta, turquoise, orange • Diameter: 28mm • Length: 137mm total, 121mm grip • Contact: silverfish-uk.com

The Gripper (another great name) from Race Face is a perfect grip for those riders who like to know exactly where their hands are at all times. The flared ends effectively function as double flanges, meaning that you don't have to worry about slipping off the end of a handlebar. The smoother surface pattern belies the level of grip on offer. If you look carefully, all those little Race Face logos on the underside are angled like shark fins to increase traction when pulling back on the bars. All the grooves help displace water as well, so wet-weather hold is better than expected. Another neat touch is the way the rubber overlaps the double collars, giving the second widest usable grip in the test. Despite the claims, it's not a very comfortable grip over long periods. We tested the 30mm diameter, but it actually measured more like 28mm. Race Face also make it in a 33mm option which is probably the better option. The Gripper also comes in the widest colour range in the test.



# RENTHAL TRACTION

£24.99 (ultra tacky, Kevlar) / £21.99 (medium, soft)

**SPECIFICATION** Weight: 118g • Options: ultra tacky, Kevlar, soft, medium compounds • Colours: black, yellow, dark grey, light grey • Diameter: 30mm • Length: 132mm total, 109mm grip Contact: ison-distribution.com

When I worked in a bike shop, I used to hate it when someone brought in a bike with old grips. They always used to leave a nasty, sticky residue on your hands that made you feel a little queasy. These Ultra Tacky compound grips from Renthal remind me of those times. They are so soft they exude a sticky coating that makes them cling to your hands like tree sap. If you are after the stickiest grip, then look no further. As the name suggests, the Traction also features mouldings to ensure maximum hold. Directional ribs run along the length to maintain grip while either pulling back or sliding forward during climbs and descents. Despite the Traction 'only' being 30mm in diameter, it's well damped for such a thin grip, with bar buzz being muted nicely. The excellent adhesion also helps reduce hand and arm fatigue, since you don't need to hold on so tightly. The only downside is, at only 109mm in length, the grip area might be a little narrow for riders with large hands.

