



TRIED & TESTED
 MCN STAFF RATE THEIR RIDING KIT
 ★★★★★

13 months ONTEST

Keis J601 Ultraflex heated jacket £220

The perfect winter partner

Tested by Saffron Wilson for 13 months
 I honestly question how I ever made it through winter without heated gear – this jacket has become an absolute essential for cold-weather riding. Avoiding the need for countless layers and therefore tight zips on your textiles, dreaded winter rides are a thing of the past as you're swaddled by a warmth which can make you think you're still tucked safely under the duvet.

But that feeling does come at a price. This is the most expensive jacket that Keis make, but there are a few reasons. Unlike its (slightly) cheaper Keis counterparts, you get heating through the lower back, so you don't get that gust of cold wind on your kidneys, there are thumb holsters, a power controller and heated collar along with ultraflex material rather than softshell or Thinsulate, which means more of a tailored fit among other advantages. I have run it exclusively from the bike, but if you want to use it off the bike as well, the battery (£90) might be a good investment for you as it's claimed to run for an hour. Because I ran it off the bike, it also meant I could plug my



Keis gloves (G601) into the sleeves and run the whole lot as one. The only slight annoyance was that I couldn't tuck the jacket into my textile trousers properly because the battery controller and connector to the bike sit at the bottom, but even so, it didn't affect the overall warmth that much. I just ensured the back of the jacket was properly tucked in. Despite wiring and heated panels throughout the jacket, it is extremely comfortable with stretch panels to ensure it's skintight without being annoying. It can often make you forget it's the jacket that is keeping you warm rather than the weather being many degrees more clement! There is a Bluetooth option which adds slightly more to the bill and means you can control the jacket from your phone rather than the power controller, but as someone who tends to pull on gloves and a helmet then realise my phone is in my pocket, I'm more than happy with the manual one that is easy to squeeze even with slightly-too-big gloves and the ability to change on the move. It has worked like a charm so far, and as the heating element has a lifetime warranty and the product itself a warranty for two years, it might be one of the pricier options, but you've got that peace of mind for those extra pennies. **MCN rating ★★★★★** www.keisapparel.com

- PROS & CONS**
- +** Keeps you warm and cosy. Stretch fit for comfort
 - Can ride up your back in textiles due to the cable



RST Pro Series Paragon 6 CE Leather Gloves £79.99

Couldn't stuff the cuff...

Tested by Emma Franklin for 9000 miles
 These are an attractive proposition for winter riders – and after more than 9000 miles, they've served me well... until now. After two years in all conditions, wearing them recently with a narrow-sleeved textile jacket forced me to leave the cuffs outside the sleeves, which led to them becoming saturated in a particularly heavy rain storm. The drawstring cuff (which, admittedly, first attracted me to the Paragon 6s in the first place, due to my lazy nature and disliking the fuff involved with squeezing gloves under cuffs) allowed water to creep in and saturated both gloves in less than an hour. While the gloves are otherwise well finished, with practical extras like visor wipes and a secure wrist strap, this incident has now rattled my faith in their abilities. At £79.99 RRP (or less online), they're competitively priced, and if rain resistance is a priority, you absolutely need to be wearing your jacket sleeves over the glove. **MCN rating ★★★★★** www.rst-moto.com



HipLok DX1000 £299.99

Good-Lok cutting this

Tested by Tom Willard for one month
 For years I've been carefully threading a chain through the wheels on my bikes, with the typical metallic clatter during unsociable hours and with road grime inevitably finding its way onto my hands – imperfections of the process that I'd just accepted. There's a different way with the DX1000 from HipLok, which is a large D-lock that can fit straight onto the wheel of your bike. I can get it on in seconds, it's rubberised to avoid scratching anything and negated the need for putting my hands between spokes and getting mucky. There's only a muted thunk when putting the two pieces together, so it's quieter than a chain too.



Whilst it's not as packable as a disc lock, I found it an easy fit in my rucksack for trips out and at 2.75kg it's not too hefty. At £299.99 it ain't cheap but it strikes immediately as a quality product from the first touch and has a stellar reputation for resilience with a Sold Secure Diamond grading – it's a top pick for bike security. **MCN rating ★★★★★** www.hiplok.com

Alpinestars GP Pro R4 gloves £249.99

Cool and comfortable

Tested by Carl Stevens for 2000 miles
 The GP Pro R4 gloves from Alpinestars may be on the pricier side of the spectrum for a set of trackday gloves, but they've been impressive in terms of fit and feel from the outset, and across a year of abuse both on road and track. Firstly, the fit and the cut is exceptional, from the off. Unlike older generations of racing gloves from Alpinestars which took quite a substantial breaking in period (especially around the fingers and knuckle), the leather accordion panelling and the mixture of bovine, goat and kangaroo leather make the fit not only true to size and cosy, but also flexible and soft on the inside. The internal seams are all hidden nicely and due to the way the panels are placed on the glove from the knuckle section back to the wrist, there's a great range of movement available – which is vital for moving around the bike on track, and stretching into a comfortable position mid-corner. The closure system on the cuff is also strong, and easy to secure.



Although they feel very protective with an additional layer of impact absorbing material, the dual-density DFS knuckle protection, aramid fibre lining and the TPU inserts in the fingers, where the GP Pro R4 leather gloves do lose a mark is due to the fact that they're only certified to CE Level 1, rather than the higher CE Level 2 that would be expected for a high-performance glove that is built for the track. Also, as you might imagine for a summer-style glove, there is an impressive amount of ventilation for those warmer days and sweeter rides, but you'll get very little protection from the elements should the heavens decide to open. But then again, that is a general trait of sportier offerings. As far as quality goes, the GP Pro R4 gloves have held up impressively well in terms of their appearance with no quality issues to report – even when they've been thrown around on road tests and in pit garages. Plus, with options in white, red or black, they look the part as well. **MCN rating ★★★★★** www.alpinestars.com

12 months ONTEST



Shoen GT-Air 3 £649.99

6000 miles ONTEST

Tested by Richard Newland for two years
 The GT-Air 3 boasts a slick drop-down sun visor, aerodynamic design, and efficient vents – all bundled up in a helmet that feels well-sorted. Superbly comfortable and cossetting from the first wear, it has lost none of its comfort or fit over the last 6000 miles. On the road, wind noise is minimal and turbulence is basically non-existent. Stability is top-notch, even at motorway speeds or when doing life-savers and the included chin curtain and nose guard keep chilly air at bay. At a measured 1802g (without comms) it's not featherweight, but you don't notice the mass when riding. It's not a cheap helmet, but worth every penny. **MCN rating ★★★★★** www.shoenassured.co.uk