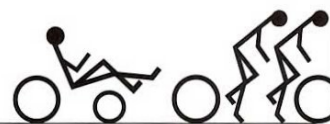


PRODUCT REVIEW

By Brian Zupke



Reverse Gear Ironbark Shorts

When I first started riding a recumbent I still wore my spandex cycling shorts designed for riding a diamond-frame road bike. Since I have a sensitive tushie, most of my shorts are padded where my backside touches the seat – mostly in the butt and crotch areas. While these shorts work great when I'm on my road bike, they don't look or feel so good when I'm riding a recumbent. The padding is simply in the wrong place. It chaffs (and kinda makes me look like I'm trying to compensate for something.)

So I tried wearing regular (non-cycling) shorts. The problem with these is that the material at the leg-openings catch air and balloon up. This is embarrassing because the drag created by the twin parachutes slows me down enough that sometimes I have a hard time keeping up with the other riders in my bike club. (That's my story and I'm sticking to it!) More importantly though, sometimes the ballooning makes the shorts ride up which means frequent readjustments to prevent exposing more of myself than I'd really like. Also, wide leg-openings provide entry for flying critters – flying critters which are also crawling critters. And flying, crawling critters which are also stinging critters. This leads to offended onlookers who don't realize I'm trying to convince flying, crawling, stinging critters to be elsewhere while at the same time trying not to expose more of myself than I'd like. All I really just want to do was enjoy my ride, you know?

Reverse Gear answered my prayers. Their

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Brian thinks the Ironbark shorts are padded just right. So do his Twitter followers . . .

Ironbark shorts are specifically designed for recumbent riders. They aren't padded unnecessarily, and the legs are snug enough to keep bugs and bees out. The 7-panel shorts have a recumbent-specific lining to prevent pressure points and chafing. They also have a string tie to allow some adjustability. The shorts are available in sizes; Medium to 3XL and come in ten bazillion different colors (ok, actually 51 different colors.)

The Ironbark shorts are quite comfortable. I really enjoy wearing them. They don't chaff or ride up, and they've helped me avoid unwanted attention. The fabric is light-weight but sturdy and durable, and the shorts are nicely styled. At \$95 a pair, they're at the higher end of the price range for recumbent shorts, but then again, they're at the higher end of the quality scale, too.

The only problem I have now that I wear Reverse Gear's Ironbark shorts is I'm going to



Dude, you work for RTR, there's no money in those pockets!

have to replace my "drag-chute" shorts alibi with something else. I know – maybe I'm slower because I'm lower to the ground than my diamond frame riding buddies, and since I'm closer to the earth, gravity is a lot stronger for me... ■

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