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MAIN BIKE TEST

WHY YOU NEED A CROSS BIKE SIX GREAT BIKES THAT SHOULD BE IN YOUR STABLE



# CYCLING **PLUS**

Issue 254 + October 2011

BRITAIN'S BEST-SELLING CYCLING MAGAZINE

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PLUS DON'T MISS ALL THIS:

**TURBO CHARGED**  
14 INDOOR TRAINERS TRIED AND TESTED

**SIZE MATTERS**  
THREE BIG BLOKES, THREE GREAT BIKES TESTED

**GET MOTIVATED!**  
SIX WAYS TO REFRESH YOUR RIDING NOW





1

4

3



CYCLING <sup>PLUS</sup>

ROAD  
TESTED

RIDDEN & RATED

# Indoor trainers

Keep your fitness levels up with some indoor pedalling. We test 14 turbos and rollers

**Y**ou have to keep riding in winter if you want to consolidate your summer fitness gains. Riding outdoors can be treacherous when it's dark and icy, which is why indoor trainers are a boon to cyclists, especially those who want to use their own bikes rather than go to a gym.

Broadly speaking there are two types of indoor trainers: the turbo trainer – which

clamps the rear wheel of the bike to a frame and uses a roller with a flywheel against the rear tyre to provide some sort of resistance, usually magnetic, fluid or air; and rollers, which consist of a frame and three plastic drums attached by a band that you put your bike on with no form of clamping. Riding rollers takes more skill than a turbo, but it can also be more fun, as well as getting closer to the actual feel of riding a bike. →

## CLAMP AND QR

**1** The bike attaches to the turbo via a clamp, which screws over the rear wheel skewer with a couple of lock nuts to keep it in place. Most turbos come with their own skewers, which you should use both for safety reasons and so as not to ruin your own.

## STAND

**2** These normally fold out to give a turbo stability. In theory, the wider the legs, the more stable it will be. Some have independent height adjustment for uneven surfaces, some lock into place, others just fold out. The feet are typically rubber tipped.

## RESISTANCE UNIT

**3** Wind, magnetic or fluid: these are the main types of resistance. How they ride depends on how well they're made and the quality of the flywheel, rather than the form of resistance. Wind trainers are generally loud, while magnetic and fluid units are quieter.

## FLYWHEEL

**4** A heavy, well balanced flywheel is generally a good thing in a turbo. It helps smooth out the ride so you don't feel you have to stomp on the pedals just to keep them going, giving you more of a sensation of riding on the road while you're stuck indoors.

# LEMOND REVOLUTION

**£400** > Turbo trainer with its own cassette

**T**he Revolution is different to your average turbo in that it comes with a SRAM/Shimano freehub body (Campag adaptor, £75) attached to a flywheel and wind unit. This means you don't use your back wheel, just the cassette, which saves tyre wear. On this the roll down – the time it takes for the flywheel to stop moving after you stop pedalling – is the best we've experienced, and that means it gets close to mimicking real world riding: sprinting on it is excellent. On the downside, the wind resistance unit is loud so you'll need your own soundproof space to avoid annoying anyone. A power measuring unit available for an extra £300.  
[www.lemondfitness.com](http://www.lemondfitness.com)

**HIGHS** Very road-like ride  
**LOWS** Loud and not cheap

**CYCLING RATING**



**WE SAY...**

Brilliantly smooth ride and saves wheel wear but it's very loud



**TACX BOOSTER**  
£289.99

**T**he Booster is designed for high power workouts at low speed. It works off magnetic resistance and boasts a 2kg flywheel, so retains some momentum when you ease off the pedals. It can also handle a sprint without bogging down or spinning out and is stable under power. It has 10 resistance settings controlled via a bar lever, and we found every level save for the lowest to be really hard work – okay if you're a bigger rider or want to do low rev workouts, but not a lightweight who likes to spin.  
[www.fisheroutdoor.co.uk](http://www.fisheroutdoor.co.uk)

★★★★★



**JETBLACK MAG PRO**  
£159.99

**I**n contrast to the more expensive JetBlack Dynameter, the Mag Pro is an excellent basic turbo trainer. It's simple to set up, not too loud and has a good roll down feel. Riding on it feels fairly natural and you can certainly sprint without it feeling too jerky. It comes with a five-level resistance lever, and we found that you can ride at level five without blowing out your knees. It's not quite the cheapest on test, the Tacx Speedmatic being £10 less, but it's certainly good for the money and one we'd recommend.  
[www.chickencycles.co.uk](http://www.chickencycles.co.uk)

★★★★★



**MINOURA V270 TRAINER** £269.99

**I**f you're after a quiet magnetic trainer, then consider the Minoura V270. Its powerful magnet helps keep the noise down as well as providing resistance. It has seven usable resistance levels controlled by a bar lever. Normal riding is good, sprinting better than average, but it's not as smooth as some of the others on test. It has adjustable legs, for using it on an uneven surface. It also comes with a training DVD that includes footage from the 2010 UCI Road World Championships and accompanying hard workout.  
[www.zyro.co.uk](http://www.zyro.co.uk)

★★★★★





# KREITLER KOMPACT HOT DOG 3.0

**£339** ▶ A light and narrow set of rollers

**T**he Kreidler Kompact Hot Dog 3.0 rollers are an all-round cool piece of kit. With a narrow 10in roller width they're a bit intimidating for the first time user but we found them surprisingly easy to get on with. The build quality is excellent and the bearings roll nicely, while still providing enough resistance for a decent aerobic workout. For sprinting they're great for sharpening up your leg speed and technique. The beauty of them being so small is that they're light and fold up neatly for easy storage. We'd happily ride these all winter.

[www.kreidler.co.uk](http://www.kreidler.co.uk)

**HIGHS** You can ride these anywhere  
**LOWS** Daunting looks for first timers

**CYCLING RATING** ★★★★★



**WE SAY...**  
Compact, light and lovely to ride – the Hot Dog cuts the mustard

## DON'T ERR INDOORS

How to get the most out of your trainer

Follow the manufacturer's instructions on setting up so that your bike doesn't move and your tyre doesn't slip. If your budget allows, get a big, powerful fan to keep yourself cool, otherwise your power will drop as the workout progresses

and your core temperature rises. It may feel harder as a result but you won't be getting the full training benefit. For long sessions, look at setting up in front of the TV/DVD player, or at least have some motivational music in your ears.

### DOS AND DON'TS

- Do** ride through winter
- Do** vary your workouts
- Do** keep your tyres pumped
- Don't** use your best race tyres
- Don't** be afraid of riding rollers
- Don't** annoy the neighbours/partner/others



## ELITE V-ARION ROLLERS £299.99

**T**he Elite V-Arion Inertial Rollers are a little bulkier than most, but there is a reason for that.

The rear roller offers three levels of resistance as well as a zero setting, which we found really useful when it came to doing high power workouts. There's also a step to make it easier to jump on and off, as well as a sturdy

base, and Elite's trademark 'parabolic' roller shape makes it far less likely that you'll slide off the edges. If you are planning a range of specific power workouts over winter then these rollers with resistance offer the best of both worlds.

[www.madison.co.uk](http://www.madison.co.uk)

★★★★★



## MINOURA MOZ ROLLERS £219.99

**M**inoura currently makes two types of rollers and the MOZ is the lower end model.

With a roller width of 415mm (16in), they're quite beginner friendly as you've got plenty of room for error if you swerve. Not that you really need it, as we found they give a stable ride. Although the roller diameter of 80mm

is small to provide extra resistance, this wasn't enough to go really hard, but you can buy a magnetic resistance unit if you feel it's not tough enough for your liking. We liked the three-way fold as well, as it makes them a little easier to store.

[www.zyro.co.uk](http://www.zyro.co.uk)

★★★★★



# KURT KINETIC ROCK AND ROLL

**£449.99** ▶ Ride indoors as if you were outdoors

This was the most enjoyable trainer on test and the best for replicating road riding. It uses a fluid resistance unit and has a heavy flywheel to keep things super smooth when you're pedalling. Its unique feature is that it allows lateral movement of the bike thanks to thick rubber spacers underneath the roller mount as well as extra long legs to keep the unit stable when you're really honking on the bar. It comes with a front wheel riser that will cope with the sideways movement too. Despite its name, the Rock and Roll isn't particularly loud, or portable. [www.chocolatedistribution.com](http://www.chocolatedistribution.com)

**HIGHS** Real world feel  
**LOWS** Expensive, heavy and bulky

**CYCLING RATING** ★★★★★

**WE SAY...**  
Gives you a road riding feel that most other trainers lack



**JETBLACK DYNAMOMETER**  
**£379.99**

The Dynamometer surprised us at how poor it was. The ride felt blocky and dead; riding at any effort was a struggle, even with varying amounts of tyre pressure. Another problem was the computer. It's meant to read time, power, cadence, speed and heart rate, but while cadence and heart rate worked, the power curve didn't track well with our PowerTap (considered to be accurate) and would under-read by a little to a lot. The mount itself was also too big for our oversize bars, even with the rubber spacer. [www.chickencycles.co.uk](http://www.chickencycles.co.uk)

★☆☆☆☆



**CYCLEOPS JET FLUID PRO**  
**£299.99**

The Jet Fluid gives consistent, progressive resistance as you step up the gears. It's smooth and retains your pedalling momentum so you can ride on it at any pace without it being a chore. Sprinting was good, not perfect, but it's hard to get a turbo that will realistically handle a full-on sprint. The other thing we liked about the Jet Fluid is that it's quiet by turbo trainer standards – we can recommend the CycleOps rubber training mat to dull noise even further. It also comes with a training DVD. [www.paligapltd.co.uk](http://www.paligapltd.co.uk)

★★★★★



**BLACKBURN TECH FLUID**  
**£174.99**

The only redeeming features about the Blackburn Tech Fluid trainer are that it's easy to set up and relatively quiet. The ride is awful, though, and you won't get much joy out of stomping away on this during winter. Increase the pace and it gets worse – the fluid unit can't seem to keep up with your accelerations or even riding steady at different effort levels. As for sprinting, don't even think about it. Almost every other turbo trainer that we've tested here is better than this one. [www.madison.co.uk](http://www.madison.co.uk)

★★★★★





**WE SAY...**  
An ideal starter turbo trainer for those on a tighter budget

# TACX SPEEDMATIC

**£149.99** > Entry option, with 10 resistance levels

**T**he Tacx Speedmatic is a low priced magnetic trainer that's a great option for a first time turbo user. It's solidly built and fairly quiet, though it requires a bit of time to set up initially. Once on it, you have a choice of 10 resistance levels plus your own gears, and we found that to be more than enough for any type of training. Roll down is excellent: we got 17 seconds coasting from a sprint to a stop on the lowest resistance setting. The power curve is quite good, although it does feel a bit easy at the top end.  
[www.fisheroutdoor.co.uk](http://www.fisheroutdoor.co.uk)

**HIGHS** Excellent ride quality  
**LOWS** Resistance at the top end

**CYCLING RATING** ★★★★★



## KINETIC ROAD MACHINE £299.99

**K**urt Kinetic's Road Machine is a well constructed fluid trainer. Like its more expensive brother the Rock and Roll, its flywheel and fluid unit give you a positive on-road feel. Training at a steady effort level was excellent, while sprinting was merely okay: the progressive resistance was good, but sharp

accelerations didn't feel natural. This is a problem with many trainers but as the Road Machine sits at the more expensive end of our test, we'd either upgrade to the excellent Rock and Roll or go for one of the cheaper ones which are nearly as good.  
[www.chocolatedistribution.com](http://www.chocolatedistribution.com)  
★★★★★



## CYCLEOPS MAGNETO £209.99

**T**he Magneto is a simple looking, lightweight, magnetic turbo trainer. It's quiet and sturdy and is easy to set up. It claims progressive resistance as you up the gears but we found it to be average in this regard as we searched for 'real world' feel. The flywheel isn't bad with a roll down of 10 seconds, but the ride

didn't feel quite as smooth as some of the other trainers on test. It does come with the *Real Rides Race Day* training DVD though – a simulation of a high intensity criterium (US national championships with Robbie Ventura) with an on-screen workout to match.  
[www.paligapltd.co.uk](http://www.paligapltd.co.uk)  
★★★★★





BEST  
ROLLERS

KREITLER KOMPACT  
HOT DOG 3 ROLLERS

BEST  
FOR  
VALUE

TACX SPEEDMATIC

KURT KINETIC  
ROCK AND ROLL

BEST  
ON  
TEST

# THE VERDICT

**WINNER** > KURT KINETIC ROCK AND ROLL Solidly made with a road-like ride

This test of low to mid-range turbo trainers and rollers showed up some standouts and some really poor products. Certainly paying more isn't always going to get you a better trainer and, as we found, putting more bells and whistles on doesn't solve underlying flaws.

Honourable mentions go to the LeMond Fitness Revolution trainer for its awesome flywheel and zero tyre wear solution, while the new Tacx Booster has set out its stall for the rider who wants a tough, low rev workout. Both these trainers will suit certain types of riders so don't just go on our scores when looking for a turbo. We also liked the Minoura V270 for its quietness – no turbo will be deathly silent but we'd consider this one to be neighbour friendly, especially in combination with a rubber mat to damp the vibrations.

In the budget stakes, we can recommend

the JetBlack Mag Pro as a good starter turbo, but when it came down to picking the best value we went for the **TACX SPEEDMATIC**. Its ride quality is similar to the JetBlack but it has 10 resistance levels, and is £10 cheaper.

All the sets of rollers we tested had their merits and you can't beat them for their skill-sharpening factor. If you've never used them before they'll take you some time to master, but we reckon it's worth it. Just don't use them on carpet until you're really confident or you might burn a hole!

The Elite V-Arion's variable resistance is a useful tool if you're planning on doing some high power workouts, while the Minoura MOZ rollers are a good beginner set. But we have to give our top rollers spot to the **KREITLER KOMPACT HOT**

**DOG 3.0**. It's a nicely made unit, very portable, not as scary as it looks (honest) and it's just so damned cool.

Finally – and this was a tough decision, partly based on the fact that most of you would prefer a turbo trainer over rollers – we have to give the overall win to the **KURT**

**KINETIC ROCK AND ROLL**.

As well as being a solidly constructed turbo that rides really well, the fact that you can get out of the saddle and really go for it and almost feel like you're on the road is a big plus. While we can't get away from the fact

The fact that you can get out of the saddle and go for it and feel almost like you're on the road is a big plus

that it'll set you back £450, if you're going to be doing weeks and maybe even months of indoor riding each year then we reckon it's a worthwhile investment. **PLUS**