



Pump action

Whether nipping to the shops or riding a sportive, a good mini pump will stop you from being stranded miles away from where you want to be. Here are the best – and the smallest – your money can buy

Being prepared isn't just for boy scouts and paranoid survivalists. It's hard out there on the road and it pays to be equipped for the worst, or at the very least a puncture. This means tube, levers and pump.

Some prefer the speed of CO₂ inflators but, with a limitless supply of free air, a mini pump is still the most dependable option to get you home. Practical, audax-riding sorts will probably keep a frame pump under their top tube. These usually work very well. However 'The Rules' of taste and decency dictate that as a roadie you must buy the smallest pump possible, ideally stashing it in a jersey pocket (use of the supplied frame mount is frowned upon by roadies as it spoils the lines of the bike). Shrinking a pump to this size while ensuring it still works can be a challenge, and while many people try to get by with only a mini pump your life will be improved by keeping a floor pump at home.

Mini pumps vary in design and ease of use. All things being equal, larger-volume pumps inflate quickest. However, they'll struggle as the pressure increases. Conversely, smaller volumes take longer but are easier to use at higher pressures. There's probably a physics equation that explains this but there's no space for school lessons here. Features to look out for include flexible hoses to stop you damaging fragile valves, and dual volumes to switch between high and low-pressure modes. The best pumps cram the longest stroke length into the smallest package, resulting in greater efficiency.

Specialized Airtool Road Flex

£30

Tough and well made, with a neat head design that attaches at 90 degrees, sadly this pump is let down by a frustratingly short stroke length. It'll achieve good pressure but it'll take a while. The handle is knurled for better grip, but the main body isn't and sweaty hands may start to slip unless you wear mitts. specialized.com

Length 205mm

Weight 106g

Pressure @ 100 strokes = 31psi

Rating

ERGONOMICS
CONSTRUCTION
EASE OF USE

OVERALL
6/10



Lezyne Gauge Drive HP

£39.99

An excellent performer though a tad big for the jersey pocket. It's tough enough to withstand even the most vigorous efforts, but unless you've arms the size of Robert Forstmann's legs, 100psi is likely the best you'll achieve. The shiny finish looks great but is slippery. The accurate inline gauge is a bonus. upgradebikes.co.uk

Length 240mm

Weight 119g

Pressure @ 100 strokes = 92psi

Rating

ERGONOMICS
CONSTRUCTION
EASE OF USE

OVERALL
8/10



Topeak RaceRocket

£24.99

Initially quick to inflate but you'll need strong arms to get tyres rock solid. With a comfortable and grippy rubber handle, this could be a rival to the Lezyne pumps, particularly if you're after compact size. Annoyingly, the head is prone to unscrewing removable valve cores so ensure they're tight before attaching. extrauk.co.uk

Length 180mm

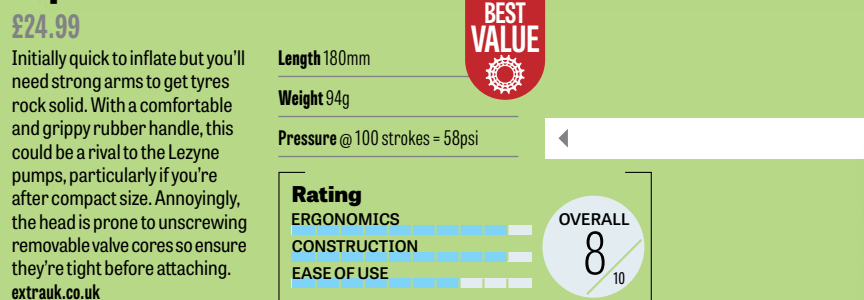
Weight 94g

Pressure @ 100 strokes = 58psi

Rating

ERGONOMICS
CONSTRUCTION
EASE OF USE

OVERALL
8/10



BBB Hoseroad

£24.95

The Hoseroad feels robust with a markedly smooth action. The medium-sized capacity means it takes a while to build pressure but it'll reach 100psi without too much arm ache. The highly flexible hose means it's easy to find a comfortable angle and the screw-on head ensures none of your effort is wasted to leaks. windwave.co.uk

Length 222mm

Weight 113g

Pressure @ 100 strokes = 48psi

Rating

ERGONOMICS
CONSTRUCTION
EASE OF USE

OVERALL
7/10



TRUFLO Road CNC

£24.99

Elegant, light and compact the TRUFLO expands to almost three times its stowed size, making it a deceptively powerful pump. Quick to reach a usable pressure, it'll make 100psi at a push. The lever mechanism is fiddly but robust and does a good job of locking to the valve. A creditable all-round performer. madison.co.uk

Length 175mm

Weight 87g

Pressure @ 100 strokes = 67psi

Rating

ERGONOMICS
CONSTRUCTION
EASE OF USE

OVERALL
7/10



Blackburn AirStik 2-Stage

£19.99

Lightweight yet solid-feeling. A toggle switch on the base swaps between high and low-pressure modes. The first quickly fills the tube while the second brings it to final pressure. It's a clever system, sadly undermined by a push-on head that's difficult to support and starts to leak before reaching 100psi. zyro.co.uk

Length 175mm

Weight 87g

Pressure @ 100 strokes = 54psi

Rating

ERGONOMICS
CONSTRUCTION
EASE OF USE

OVERALL
5/10





Lezyne Road Drive V2 ABS

£37.99

Reassuringly solid and expensive. The flexible hose reduces risk of valve damage, and the Air Bleed System (ABS) releases residual pressure, making it less likely to unscrew valve cores. It reaches a good pressure quickly, although getting above 100psi can be hard work with slippery hands. upgradebikes.co.uk

Length 196mm
Weight 83g
Pressure @ 100 strokes = 53psi

Rating
ERGONOMICS
CONSTRUCTION
EASE OF USE

OVERALL
7/10

PRO Performance Telescopic

£29.99

This pump's length makes it a touch too long for easy pocket storage but its dual chambers soon raise a good pressure, while high-pressure mode uses just the smaller of the two, for easier pumping. A T-handle and long stroke mean you can really give it some beans, although the lever protrudes awkwardly. madison.co.uk

Length 300mm
Weight 149g
Pressure @ 100 strokes = 82psi

Rating
ERGONOMICS
CONSTRUCTION
EASE OF USE

OVERALL
7/10



Zefal Xlight Carbon

£39.99

Small and light but it might be quicker to walk home than use this to re-inflate your tyres. Despite its diminutive size it's comfortable in the hand and remains functional even at higher pressures, although you'll be battling leakage before 100psi. Hard to recommend even for weight weenies. chickencycles.co.uk

Length 165mm
Weight 51g
Pressure @ 100 strokes = 21psi

Rating
ERGONOMICS
CONSTRUCTION
EASE OF USE

OVERALL
4/10



Topeak PocketRocket DX II

£21.99

Nicely pitched capacity strikes a balance between speed and ease, which means you'll make it to 100psi in an acceptable time and without too much puffing. It's also one of only a few pumps that happily exceed the hundred mark. Old-fashioned looks and low price belie a pump that's efficient and well made. extrauk.co.uk

Length 220mm
Weight 114g
Pressure @ 100 strokes = 52psi

Rating
ERGONOMICS
CONSTRUCTION
EASE OF USE

OVERALL
7/10



Birzman Zacoo

£24.99

If you prize size and weight above other qualities, the Zacoo is worth considering. The screw-on design is solid, neat and effective, getting a tyre to a usable state within a few minutes. Push on and it'll hit 100psi, though you'll struggle to keep hold of the head. A serviceable option for people wanting minimalist kit. i-ride.co.uk

Length 123mm
Weight 66g
Pressure @ 100 strokes = 34psi

Rating
ERGONOMICS
CONSTRUCTION
EASE OF USE

OVERALL
7/10



BBB Compact Road

£19.95

Looking like a piece of drug paraphernalia, this lightweight pump does a decent job, even if the unusually shaped head is a little more prone to breaking valves than a screw-on type. It inflates to a decent pressure without fuss, though it'll start to leak more air than you can push in as you approach 100psi. windwave.co.uk

Length 180mm
Weight 73g
Pressure @ 100 strokes = 44psi

Rating
ERGONOMICS
CONSTRUCTION
EASE OF USE

OVERALL
6/10



IT'S GREAT TO INFLATE



In an attempt at scientific analysis we created a test rig from pump parts, plumbing spares and bits from an aquarium. This allowed us to see in real time the pressure generated while inflating a 23c tyre. The pressure after 100 strokes gives a good idea of how quickly they'll fill your tyre but ignores less quantifiable results, such as how tired your arm will be once you reach 100psi. The gold standard is a pump that quickly inflates yet remains usable as the pressure nears a ton, a point some pumps struggled to reach at all, despite the claims on their packaging. Some chuck designs were totally airtight while others started to leak when the going got tough. Ergonomics also play a big part in how pleasant each pump is to use. 🚲