



# Cycle lights

Illuminate the road or trail ahead, spot obstacles and pot holes and make yourself seen by traffic with a powerful set of front and rear lights for night riding

## FRONT

**1 LEZYNE MEGA DRIVE £170** [shop.upgradebikes.co.uk](http://shop.upgradebikes.co.uk)  
Pumping out a dazzling 1,400 lumens in overdrive mode (if only for 1 hour 15 mins) or a more than adequate 600 lumens for 2½ hours, this is a beautifully built aluminium lamp with a clean, bright beam ideal for road or trail. It also packs some very useful features. The battery power indicator, for instance, helps you manage light use, while the rechargeable battery is replaceable so you can clip in a spare (£30) for all-night rides. It recharges in 6 hours from the mains, or 12 hours via USB.  
**Verdict** A fabulous beam with the option of spare batteries.  
**Rating** ■■■■■■■■■■

**2 PDW COSMIC DREADNOUGHT £30, [paligap.cc](http://paligap.cc)**  
This was the first light we tested and we were impressed until the others blazed onto the scene. A few years ago a 110 lumens light would have been a fantasy. Today, however, it doesn't quite cut the mustard, despite the highly competitive price (due in part to the use of disposable not rechargeable batteries). If most of your riding is on lit, urban streets, then this is a solid buy, especially with the cutaway sides for extra visibility. But if you ride unlit roads or trails, pay more for a lamp that lights up more of the way ahead.  
**Verdict** Good for city commuting, but that's its limit.  
**Rating** ■■■■■■■■■■

**3 CATEYE VOLT 1200 £150** [zyro.co.uk](http://zyro.co.uk)  
Cheaper, neater and just as bright as the Lezyne, there's lots to like about the Volt. First and foremost, there's a tremendous 1200 lumens beam available for up to 2 hours, while in all-night mode it can stretch its power to a duller but usable 17½ hours. The 'hyper constant' combination of bright beam plus pulse is great for night riding in traffic. Where the Volt loses out is in its basic power indicator which only signals when the battery is down to its last 20%, and which doesn't work when the lamp is in its brightest setting.  
**Verdict** With a better power indicator this might have won.  
**Rating** ■■■■■■■■■■

**4 LIFELINE USB HIGH POWER 500 LUMENS £30** [wiggles.co.uk](http://wiggles.co.uk)  
An astonishing price for a light of this brightness, the Lifeline is worth serious consideration. It's 'high' mode (2 hours battery life) is more than adequate for unlit roads, and the medium, low and flash power levels extend the battery life. If you're looking for a light for commuting on lit roads, look no further. A series of four blue lights indicate the remaining power, and it recharges via USB. The only downside is the handlebar mount which seems flimsy, and would concern us on bumpy trails.  
**Verdict** An absolute bargain for road cycling.  
**Rating** ■■■■■■■■■■

**5 LIGHT & MOTION TAZ 1500 £230, [madison.co.uk](http://madison.co.uk)**  
With the brightest, most far reaching and broadest beam on test, the Taz outguns all its rivals, delivering a blinding 1500 lumens (for 1½ hours). Lower light outputs extend battery life to three or even six hours, and the pulse mode is particularly effective at signalling your road presence in low light conditions. A power indicator reveals the remaining battery life, but when the juice has gone there's no replacement option - you'll need to recharge it (4 hours via USB). It also got very hot as soon as we stopped riding.  
**Verdict** Loses to the Lezyne only due to no spare battery option  
**Rating** ■■■■■■■■■■

**WHAT TO LOOK FOR**

**Beam** – The brighter the better, but check for the distance and spread of light, especially if you're going off-road.

**Battery life** – These LEDs devour power in their high output settings, so power indicators and the option to fit a spare battery are useful. Choose a run time that will match your cycling lifestyle.

**Clamp** – At this price you'll be taking your lights off the bike whenever you leave it, so look for a robust clamp that will last and last.

## REAR

**1 CATEYE RAPID X £35** [zyro.co.uk](http://zyro.co.uk)  
A featherweight with a heavyweight punch, this tiny light packs an amazing 25 lumens. Its small size means you can mount it on seat stays or seat post, and its design makes it visible from front and side, which is smart. USB charging takes two hours and offers up to 30 hours of run time in flash mode, although we'd go for one of the more powerful of the five modes.  
**Verdict** A super bright light with impressive all-round visibility.  
**Rating** ■■■■■■■■■■

**2 LEZYNE ZECTO DRIVE AUTO £40** [shop.upgradebikes.co.uk](http://shop.upgradebikes.co.uk)  
Designed like a luxury sports watch, the three LEDs resembling the dials of a chronograph, this is dead easy to fit, feels robust, and flashes for up to 7 hours, although we'd advise a more regular flash pattern with about 4 hours usage. There's a good power indicator too.  
**Verdict** Well built, good features and very bright.  
**Rating** ■■■■■■■■■■

**3 LIGHT & MOTION VIS 180 £70** [madison.co.uk](http://madison.co.uk)  
If the purpose of a rear light is to be seen, nothing in this test comes close to the retina-damaging dazzle of the Vis 180. If you night ride in a group, this could be an issue for the riders behind, but to traffic you're unmissable. There are 70 lumens at play here, in both red and amber, and they completely overshadow the light's rivals. A four-stage indicator reveals remaining power in the rechargeable batteries, and it will pulse in high power for 6 hours.  
**Verdict** Outstandingly bright and the clear winner.  
**Rating** ■■■■■■■■■■

**4 PDW DANGERZONE TAIL £24** [paligap.cc](http://paligap.cc)  
As the only rear light on test using disposable batteries, the Dangerzone has something of an advantage. As its power declines, the light simply gets dimmer, where the rechargeable rivals go blank, and you can expect up to 50 hours' life. It's smartly designed too, angled to offset the rake of a seatpost for a horizontal beam. On the downside, it can't match its rivals for brightness in maximum power output.  
**Verdict** A low maintenance option with no recharging issues.  
**Rating** ■■■■■■■■■■