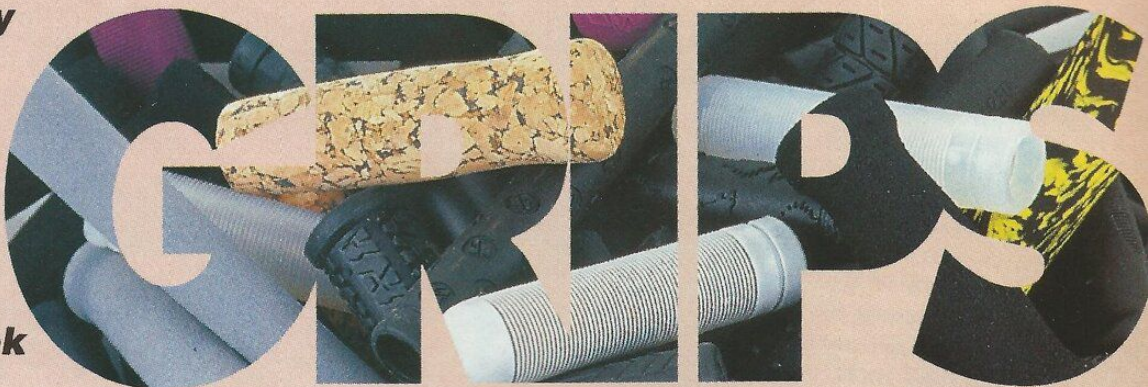


They might be small and cheap, but grips are very important in the rider comfort stakes. BRANT RICHARDS gave 38 a squeeze, STEVE BEHR took the pics



It's daft to keep harking back to the old days, but along with bulmoose bars and centre-ridge tyres, one of the great things about the early MTBs in Britain were the grips - whopping Oakley B-1 ski pole grips, with a flappy bit on the outside.

There weren't many grips available for ages, only the first Grab On Mountain grips and the fantastic Tange Supple Grip.

It was really groovy, like a little B-1, but of the funkiest rubber.

Gradually the grip market has expanded, with the needs of the riders changing over the years. Riders want removable ends to let them fit bar ends, skinnier grips that lessen hand cramp, and better rubber to help glue their hands to the bars. The following are all the top grips around, as well as a few others...

Ritchey True Grip



An ergonomically-shaped hex grip from the master. With moulded-in ends, the True Grip is suitable for use with or without bar ends. The tacky, soft rubber offers a good balance between durability and grip. A little bulky with mitts.

Price: £7.95

Comfort: ●●●●○

Value: ●●●○○

Ritchey True Grips II



A lighter, improved version of the True Grip, with grip-inducing rubber ribs spiralling along its length. The soft rubber isn't enough to induce blisters, but it can get a little rough. Better with gloves.

Price: £8.95

Comfort: ●●●●○

Value: ●●●○○

Answer Aggressor



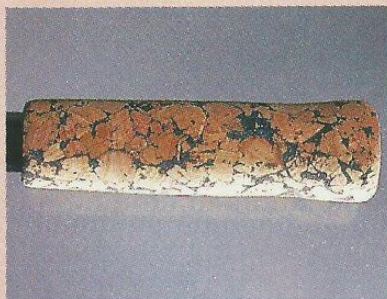
Answer combine most aspects of grip design with ribs, grip patches, smooth areas and zip tie slots giving an excellent combination of grip and comfort, but the ridges on the underside kill your fingers when damp.

Price: £7.95

Comfort: ●●●●○

Value: ●●●○○

Ciclolinea Corky



They're made from cork! Why? To add the final touch of class to your dowelling handlebars? To pop in the top of your waterbottle to stop your wine going off? Does a reasonable job of shock absorbing, but is way too bulky for our tastes.

Price: £6.99

Comfort: ●●●●○

Value: ●●●○○

Tange Supple Grips



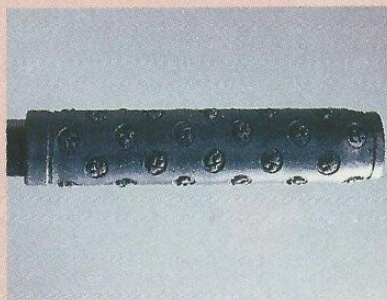
Yeehah! The old faves back from the past, thanks to Kingfisher! Unsuitable for use with bar ends because of the raised end flange. The ergonomic support stops wrist ache, but make sure the angle's right or they'll dig into your hands.

Price: £3.99

Comfort: ●●●●○

Value: ●●●○○

GT Kraton



A nice round, racing style grip from GT, standard issue on many of their production bikes, but available to the aftermarket too. The rubber is another lump of Kraton, and the design feels very like the Porcipaws in use, with small knobbls for good grip.

Price: £6.95

Comfort: ●●●●○

Value: ●●●○○

Handeez Foam



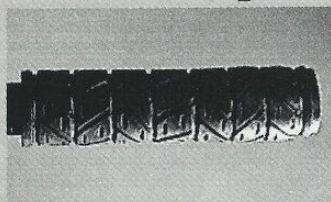
We got quite a selection of Handeez grips, from the basic grip with free brake lever covers (£7.29) to a 4-piece bar end and grip set (£8.70) and a 2-piece bar end set (£5.75). Handeez Foam is the stuff that doesn't degrade like crazy. Three year guarantee.

Price: £7.29 (basic)

Comfort: ●●●●○

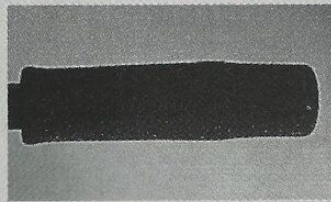
Value: ●●●○○

OGK Grips



Funky straight round grips from OGK. Great for use with bar ends, it's a soft rubber that grips and soaks shock well. A bit slippery in the wet 'cause of the big rubber areas.
Price: £5.99
Comfort: ●●●●○
Value: ●●●●○

Hunt-Wilde M-9



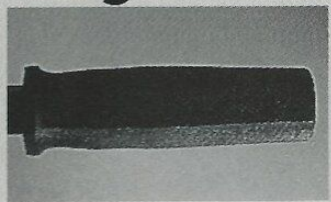
Built in Tampa by the world's largest grip manufacturer, these are pretty big. Ideal for recreational riders who want a comfortable foam grip for light use. My mum loves 'em.
Price: £2.99
Comfort: ●●●●●
Value: ●●●●●

Hunt-Wilde Vibrafoam 2



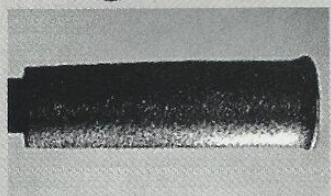
Everything I've said about the M-9s can be doubled. Comes with freezer bag ties. Great for recreational and touring. Not for the down-and-dirty hardcore racer... friends will laugh.
Price: £3.99
Comfort: ●●●●●
Value: ●●●●○

Kingfisher Softlex



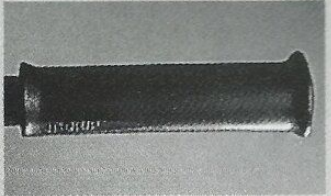
Yikes! A grip made of foam, with a hex pattern. If you like hex grips and foam, these could be the grips for you. They have open ends and end plugs, so they're fine for bar ends.
Price: £3.75
Comfort: ●●●●●
Value: ●●●●○

Kingfisher Kraton



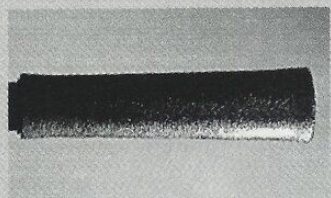
At 140g, these are the heftiest grips on test, but the rubber is super sticky and comfort way high. Fab value for money at under three quid. Good control. Great without mitts.
Price: £2.99
Comfort: ●●●●●
Value: ●●●●●

Hermans H-Grip



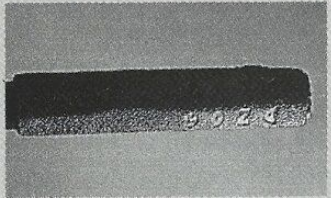
I've never seen one of these before but that doesn't make it a bad grip. It's got the usual aero ergonomic section, with raised flanges at the ends to guide your hand into place.
Price: £1.99
Comfort: ●●●○
Value: ●●●●○

Hermans Round



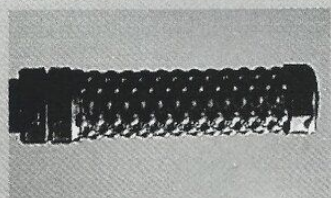
Using the same material as the H-Grip, this grip flares gently outwards from the thumb end to the little finger end. The change in diameter is so small that you don't notice it.
Price: £1.99
Comfort: ●●●○
Value: ●●●●○

Kona Race Lite



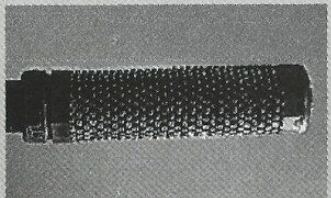
Super skinny grip fitted to all '93 Konas. Hex design, the smallest diameter we've found. The rubber is quite soft, but not shock absorbing. Great with mitts. Quite hard without.
Price: £5.95
Comfort: ●●●○
Value: ●●●○

ATI Newtron Mountain



Using shallow knobbles on the grip surface, this ATI grip is designed for dry conditions and general riding. The Newtron Mountain is an excellent grip for almost any use.
Price: £6.45
Comfort: ●●●○
Value: ●●●○

ATI ISO Mountain



Slightly heavier wet weather grip says the catalogue. The thousands of small 'ISO-Grippers' along the length promote clitoral stimulation, sorry, good grip, even in damp conditions.
Price: £6.45
Comfort: ●●●○
Value: ●●●○

Yeti Speed Grips



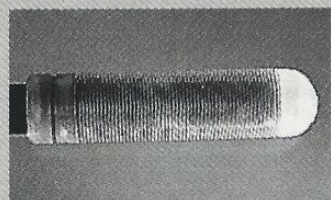
The most aggressive grip we've seen, the Yeti grip leaves imprints saying ITEY ITEY in your hands. Great with gloves or used as a John-Bull printing set.
Price: £7.50
Comfort: ●●●○
Value: ●●●○

OnZa Porcupaws



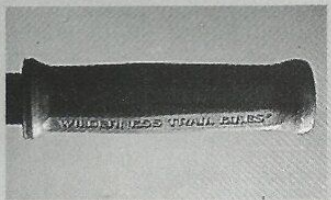
Dead soft, skinny round size, comfy, grippy and wear out fast. Zip-tie grooves and anti-cookie-cutter caps provided, which work without bar ends. With bar ends, tap out the ends.
Price: £4.95
Comfort: ●●●●●
Value: ●●●○

ODI Attack



Tomac's own design of grip is available in several colours, with an open or closed end design. The grip has fine ribs to do the shock absorbing and stay comfy. Very good.
Price: £8.50
Comfort: ●●●●●
Value: ●●●○

WTB Trail Grip



The WTB Trail Grip hasn't changed design in years. It's made in natural rubber apparently, and feels good too. Water seals are moulded on the thumb side to reduce spinning.
Price: £6.95
Comfort: ●●●○
Value: ●●●○

Advent ATB Gel Grips



Made from a really weird rubber, these grips gave us considerable amusement just squidding them about. A bit squishy for racers.

Price: £5 (Identical Emmelle Knobbly Gel £4.25)
 Comfort: ●●●●●
 Value: ●●●○○

Emmelle Extra Soft



Yup, they're extra soft in a thick, bulging style and come with end caps. Ideal for recreational use or cleaning the car. Great for chauvinists to put "on the wife's bike".

Price: £1.95
 Comfort: ●●●●●
 Value: ●●●●●

Emmelle Chevron Gel



A round, slightly bulging grip with built in tough end-cap. Nicely tacky rubber, sufficiently squishy to absorb much trail resonance. Reasonable budget buy.

Price: £2.98
 Comfort: ●●●●●
 Value: ●●●●●

Cassano Progrip



Incredibly tacky rubber with comfy ribs. Water seals at the thumb end to resist spinning. Flanges mean problematical bar end use, but anything is possible. Amazing value.

Price: £2.69
 Comfort: ●●●●●
 Value: ●●●●●

Avenir MTB Grips



OEM on Diamond Back bikes, available for folks who like to keep the same equipment on their bikes. Nice hard rubber, small diameter grip and quite long. Good value.

Price: £5.95
 Comfort: ●●●●●
 Value: ●●●○○

Tioga Biogrip



Standard Biogrip in dense foam with ergo section. Use them the other way around from shown to give thumb abrasion-protection on the brake lever. A Biogrip II costs less.

Price: £7.95
 Comfort: ●●●●●
 Value: ●●●○○

Spec'zed Autopilot Comp Specialized Biotomic



Skinny diameter, nice length and round section with no flanges. The grip has slight relief down its length, with little ridges. Good grip, and the soft rubber is durable. Built-in ends.

Price: £5.95
 Comfort: ●●●●●
 Value: ●●●●●

Bontrager Race Lite



The ultimate in skinny grips. Open ended with a substantial end-cap, perfect for bar ends. The grip is half smooth, half gripper ridges. Skinny, grippy, durable. Perfect race grip.

Price: £4.95
 Comfort: ●●●●●
 Value: ●●●●●

Emmelle Foam Grips



The worst looking and smelling grips on test, but that's not how we rate them. They're made of a dense foam, which results in a bulky grip, and are sweaty in use. Not recommended.

Price: £3.95
 Comfort: ●○○○○
 Value: ●○○○○

Emmelle MTB Grips



I thought we'd seen the last of tapered grips. Do you have tapered hands? Very hard rubber gives blisters. Un-ergonomic shape makes it more uncomfy. Not recommended.

Price: £1.59
 Comfort: ●○○○○
 Value: ●○○○○

Cassano Ergo Ring



Made from the same tacky rubber as the Progrip, this grip features Odi style ribs along its length. It's got an oval section which your hands should find comfortable (mine did).

Price: £2.49
 Comfort: ●●●●●
 Value: ●●●●●

Vetta Gel



More akin to saddle construction, this grip features a rubber main grip, with a Lycra-covered gel section to do extra shock absorbing. Very comfy without gloves; a little bulky with.

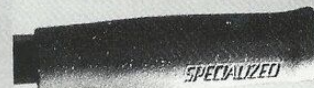
Price: £8.95
 Comfort: ●●●●●
 Value: ●●●○○

Tioga Biogrip II



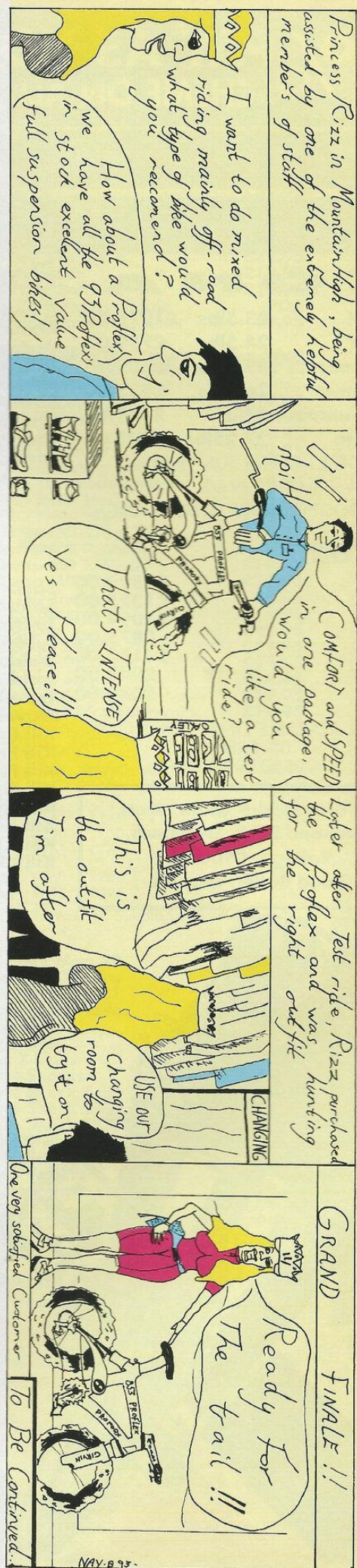
Curved upper with flattened underside (isn't that a Boost bar?), gives good purchase for the fingers. Hard rubber doesn't absorb shock well, but is plenty durable.

Price: £6.95
 Comfort: ●●●●●
 Value: ●●●○○



A gentle ergo section grip marked left and right (only difference is the logo being upside down). The ends are moulded in, and the rubber is a nice soft yet tough type. Recommended.

Price: £5.95
 Comfort: ●●●●●
 Value: ●●●●●



Specialized Autopilot



Standard Autopilot is a slightly bulging variety with the same slight relief ridges on it. Moulded-in end caps help stop the scone cutter effect, and OK with bar ends.
Price: £5.95
Comfort: ●●●●●
Value: ●●●●○

Specialized Gripshift



For use with the little-seen SRAM Gripshift. Round knobles massage your palms as you ride. Gripshift bit will need sticking on really well. Best grip we've seen of this type.
Price: £5.95
Comfort: ●●●●●
Value: ●●●●○

Fitting grips

There are several ways to ensure your grips don't fall off your bars at the worst moment:

- 1. Hairspray.** Lets you slide the grips on and then sets. Don't try hair mousse or hair gel, it doesn't work.
- 2. Vulcanising solution.** From your puncture repair kit, rather than Mr Spock's home planet. Sort of rots the rubber and fixes it to the bar.
- 3. Spray paint.** BMX-type tip from Bad News. Could be a wind-up though. Could look really cool with see-through grips. Give it a go.

Five things not to fit grips with:

- 1. Sainsbury's lard**
- 2. Post-it notes**
- 3. Eczema cream**
- 4. Hydrogen gas**
- 5. Stomach bile**

Make	Model	Weight	Length	Circ	Section	Colours	Distributor
Ritchey	True Grip	124	125	112	Hex	Bk	Cycleurope ☎ 0234 217707
Ritchey	True Grip II	98	120	112	Hex, Ribs	Bk	Cycleurope ☎ 0234 217707
Answer	Aggressor	88	121	106	Round, Ribs	Bk, Bl, Pi, Pu, Gn	ATB Sales ☎ 0424 753566
Cicliolinea	Corky	44	129	115	Tapered	Bk	Kingfisher ☎ 081-805 3088
Tange	Supple Grips	138	105	112	Ergo	Bk	Kingfisher ☎ 081-805 3088
Handeez	Foam Grips	92	120	116	Round	Bk, Gy	Kingfisher ☎ 081-805 3088
OGK		110	120	106	Round	Bk	Kingfisher ☎ 081-805 3088
Hunt/Wilde	M Nine	42	140	117	Round/Bulge	Bk	Kingfisher ☎ 081-805 3088
Hunt/Wilde	Vibrafoam 2	30	115	125	Round/Bulge	Bk	Kingfisher ☎ 081-805 3088
Kingfisher	Soffflex	60	124	115	Hex/Bulge	Bk	Kingfisher ☎ 081-805 3088
Kingfisher	Kraton	140	123	117	Ergo	Bk	Kingfisher ☎ 081-805 3088
H-mans	H Grip	98	123	104	Ergo	Bk	Kingfisher ☎ 081-805 3088 or CRA
H-mans	Round	100	127	104	Round	Bk	CRA ☎ 081-947 4784
Kona	Race Lite	68	130	96	Hex	Bk	Kona ☎ 0784 251000
ATI	Newtron	72	122	100	Round, Lumps	Bk	Evolution ☎ 081-290 0807
ATI	Iso-Grip	92	123	103	Round, Knobs	Bk	Evolution ☎ 081-290 0807
Yeti	Speed Grips	68	120	108	Round, Relief	Bk, Pu, Bl	Evolution/Hot Wheels ☎ 0202 425744
Onza	Porcupaws	68	115	96	Round, Relief	Bk, Pu	NTI UK ☎ 081-423 0824 + Caratti
ODI	Attack	82	117	103	Round, Ribs	Bk, Gy, Cl, Pu	NTI UK ☎ 081-423 0824 + Hot Wheels
WTB	Trail Grip	100	125	106	Hex	Bk	NTI UK ☎ 081-423 0824
Advent	ATB Trail Grip	138	128	116	Round, Relief	Bk	Hot Wheels ☎ 0202 425744
Bonty	Race Lite Grips	60	113	98	Round, Relief	Bk	Global Fridge ☎ 0284 728148
Emmelle	Extra Soft Foam	44	126	120	Bulge	Bk	Moore-Large ☎ 0582 575155
Emmelle	Foam Grips	30	124	109	Round	Y/Bk	Moore-Large ☎ 0582 575155
Emmelle	Knobbly Gell	138	128	116	Round, Relief	Bk	Moore-Large ☎ 0582 575155
Emmelle	Chevron Gel	120	120	110	Bulge	Bk	Moore-Large ☎ 0582 575155
Emmelle	MTB Grips	156	125	112	Tapered	Bk	Moore-Large ☎ 0582 575155
Cassano	Pro Grip	104	124	107	Ergo	Bk	Moore-Large ☎ 0582 575155
Avenir	MTB Grips	84	135	97	Round	Bk	Moore-Large ☎ 0582 575155
Cassano	Ergo Ring	104	122	101	Round	Bk	Moore-Large ☎ 0582 575155
Vetta	Gel Grips	158	127	113	Round	Bk/Y/Pi/Gn/Or	Caratti ☎ 0454 273733
Tioga	Biogrip II	120	129	105	Ergo	Bk/Pi/Gn/Or	Caratti ☎ 0454 273733
Tioga	Biogrip	76	125	105	Ergo	Bk	Caratti ☎ 0454 273733
Specialized	Autopilot Comp	68	130	92	Round	Bk	SBC UK ☎ 0372 740084
Specialized	Biotomic	94	127	107	Ergo	Bk	SBC UK ☎ 0372 740084
Specialized	Autopilot	112	128	107	Bulge	Bk	SBC UK ☎ 0372 740084
Specialized	Gripshift Grip	116	80	112	Bulge	Bk	SBC UK ☎ 0372 740084
GT	Kraton	86	140	98	Round, Relief	Bk	Caratti ☎ 0454 273733