



CLOTHING

Off-road riding

Looser and less form-fitting than road-bike clothing, off-road clothes prioritize freedom of movement over the need to be aerodynamically slick. Baggy mountain bike shorts are hard-wearing, with practical pockets, and padded liners for extra comfort on rough, rocky terrain. Waterproof options can help you withstand splashes of mud and water on the trail, while full-face helmets and body armour help protect you on more extreme rides.

BEFORE YOU BUY

Comfort and flexibility are crucial to off-road gear so be sure to shop around and try clothes on before you buy.

- Ensure shorts and trousers allow you to move your legs freely.
- When trying on tops and jackets, make sure they allow you room to stretch upwards, and that they do not ride up to expose your back.
- Choose clear glasses that can be worn all year round. Some have interchangeable lenses – yellow ones are good for overcast or dull light conditions.
- Helmets should fit properly. Always buy the right size headgear; check that it comes with the correct certification.

MOUNTAIN BIKE CLOTHING

Off-road clothing is designed to allow you as broad a range of movements as possible. Baggy shorts accommodate protective knee pads and are designed to be worn over padded lycra shorts, or feature an integrated liner, so you do not need underwear. Breathable fabrics keep you insulated as well as dry, and shoes have durable soles with ample tread.

- 1 **Wicking underlayer** moves your sweat away from your skin.
- 2 **Baggy jersey** offers you a full range of movements.
- 3 **Softshell mountain bike jacket** protects against wind and showers.
- 4 **Baggy shorts** with a padded liner give you a more comfortable ride.
- 5 **Merino socks** provide warmth.
- 6 **Full-finger, padded gloves** with extra grip protect your hands.
- 7 **Lightweight, vented helmet** fully covers your head.
- 8 **Ankle-height shoes** with off-road cleats allow you to pedal efficiently.
- 9 **Glasses** with orange or yellow interchangeable lenses.



EXTRAS

Good-quality accessories will reduce the risk of broken bones and bruises. Full-face helmets are vital for extreme mountain biking, while goggles protect eyes from debris. Knee and elbow pads give you maximum flexibility without compromising your safety.



FOR WET WEATHER

Taking to the trails in wet weather is a lot more comfortable if you are wearing the right clothing. Overtrousers protect your legs from wheel spray, and socks may come with waterproof liners.



FOR COLD WEATHER

Jackets with dropped backs and high necks keep the cold out and the heat in. You can wear your neck warmers like scarves, or folded upwards to keep ears warm. Full-length bib tights form an insulating layer against your skin.



Buyer's tip: Waterproof jackets can lose their water-resistance if they become too dirty and sweaty: the fabric will start to absorb rather than repel water. In-wash products can help with re-proofing, and durable water repellent sprays are also available.

CLOTHING CARE

Off-road clothes can be expensive so always check the manufacturer's instructions before washing them in case you inadvertently damage them. Avoid household fabric softeners as they can damage a material's wicking properties.

- Wash any mud off in the shower before putting your clothes in the washing machine.
- Clean your shorts after every ride to avoid bacterial build-up.
- Wash your cycling clothes separately – they need a cool, gentle setting with a low spin speed. Use a detergent that works at low temperatures.
- Zip up your jacket before putting it in the machine to prevent the zip tearing other clothes.
- Air-dry Lycra-based or other stretchy clothing. Hot tumble driers can wreck expensive kit.



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Content taken from *The Complete Bike Owner's Manual*
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