



GroupTest

GPS devices

Better-quality GPS devices offer satnav-style mapping and navigation as well as typical bike computer functions. **Katherine Moore** tests four units



KATHERINE MOORE

Katherine is a keen bikepacker and off-road rider who created the East Devon Trail (eastdevontrail.com) during lockdown

GPS bike computers have revolutionised how we ride, with many models offering satnav-type mapping and turn-by-turn route navigation. Forget having to stop at each junction to check the paper map: these handy electronic devices can help keep you on your pre-planned route as you pedal, or display mapping so you can explore as you please.

While all GPS cycle computers will be able to record your ride and give you metrics such as speed and distance, modern units also boast comprehensive mapping functionality. These can load cycle routes in the form of GPX files and can often be linked to a companion app on your mobile so you can adjust your route on the fly.

You can scroll through a series of screens on your unit to see ride data and maps, which you can zoom in and out of to see more detail or move around, just as you might with digital maps on your phone or PC. Most GPS units can also display an elevation chart of your route, with more advanced models also boasting clever climbing features to help keep you informed about the challenges ahead.

While modern phones can also offer satnav-style navigation, given the right app, GPS units tend to last a lot longer before needing to be recharged.

Cycle's test promise

At Cycle, we are proudly independent. There's no pressure to please advertisers as we're funded by **your** membership. Our product reviews aren't press releases; they're written by experienced cyclists after thorough testing.

Details WHAT TO LOOK FOR



1 Battery life

If you enjoy long rides or cycling on consecutive days, opting for a cycling GPS unit with a good battery life will be a wise move. Screen brightness and the energy demand of routing will both drain the battery, so check the capacity carefully before making your choice.

2 Display

Pricier GPS units will offer colour displays, which can be really useful for distinguishing between rivers, roads and different trail types on mapping modes. Besides the screen, some units also use LED lights that can be programmed to

alert you to upcoming navigational cues.

3 Operation

Cycle computers either use buttons or a touchscreen – or a combination of the two – to enable you to move between screens. Mounts are supplied, positioning the computer on handlebar or stem for easy viewing as you ride.

4 Ride data

More advanced cycle computers allow you to choose what ride data you prioritise, whether that's simple measures like speed and distance or more complex information such as power output, heart rate zones or ambient temperature.