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7 Best Bike Shorts of 2024

By [Amanda Capritto](#)



Edited by [Marlo Jappen Porto](#)

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Bike shorts are designed to keep you comfortable and improve your performance. There are different types of bike shorts for different types of riding, and it's important to choose the right kind for your bike, riding style, and body.

As a cyclist and triathlete, I've narrowed the options based on personal experience, research, and interviews with cyclists of different disciplines. The best overall bike shorts are the Rapha Core Bib Shorts, which are made with a lightweight and breathable material and soft, flexible bib straps – suspenderlike straps that prevent the shorts from rolling down or bunching as you ride – with ventilation panels built into the design. We also feature options for different types of athletes, including mountain bikers, long-distance riders, and gym-goers.

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Best Overall

Rapha Women's Core Bib Shorts »



PROS:

- ✓ Made from durable, high-quality fabrics
- ✓ Breathable and moisture-wicking
- ✓ Reasonably priced
- ✓ Dense, protective chamois (padding sewn into cycling shorts for shock absorption and added comfort)
- ✓ High-stretch bib strap
- ✓ Leg grippers keep shorts in place

CONS:

- ✗ Largest size is XL
- ✗ Only two colors

[Buy From REI](#)

The Rapha Core Bib Shorts are oft-recommended in the worlds of cycling and triathlons. They're known for their supremely stretchy straps and breathable yet opaque shorts fabric. Additionally, the size-specific chamois provides consistent comfort and coverage, and the flatlock seams throughout the design minimize chafing potential. Flatlock seams don't have the cordlike appearance of traditional seams and are often used in sportswear because they're smoother and less irritating.

Laura Perazza, a friend and fellow triathlete, says the Rapha Core Bib Shorts are one of the best investments she has made since starting the sports of cycling and triathlon. "After trying a few nonbranded biking shorts when I started cycling, I found bibs and they changed my life," Perazza says. "My favorite became the Rapha Core Bib Shorts."

Perazza, who's training for her second Ironman 70.3 race and USA Triathlon Nationals at the time of writing, says that "the padding [chamois] makes riding so comfortable, and the over-the-shoulder straps are seamless. The bib fabric is also great with sweat and doesn't make me feel drenched when riding, even in the Florida summer."

She also notes that the durability “has been outstanding” and says the Core Bib Shorts are “the best find” on her cycling journey because they’ve allowed her to stay comfortable and dry for several hours even on hot days.

“In bibs, like in life, quality is an investment, and these are worth every penny,” she says. At \$130, these shorts aren’t cheap, but they’re certainly reasonably priced for their quality, durability, comfort, and reputation.

Specs

List Price:	\$130
Materials:	84% polyester, 16% Lycra
Inseam(s):	9 in.
Sizes:	XXS-XL

[Buy From REI »](#)

Best Budget

Pearl iZUMi Women’s Quest Shorts »

**PROS:**

- ✓ Relatively inexpensive
- ✓ Great entry-level bike shorts
- ✓ Silicone leg grippers keep shorts in place on thighs
- ✓ Available in sizes up to XXXL

CONS:

- ✗ May shift during movement due to lack of bib straps
- ✗ Some customers say waistband occasionally rolls down

[Buy From Pearl iZUMi](#)

Frequently recommended as a budget-friendly choice for cycling, Pearl iZUMi makes performance-oriented gear at a lower price than you'll find from most cycling brands. The Quest Shorts sell for \$60, which is half the price of most popular bike shorts.

These are shorts and not a bib so they don't have shoulder straps. Many cyclists find shorts more comfortable than bibs (and they're easier when it comes to bathroom breaks), but they do lend themselves to more shifting during the ride than bibs.

That said, if you’re looking for budget-friendly bike shorts, the Pearl iZUMi Quest Shorts should be on your radar. Made of a compressive fabric, this pair features a single-density chamois for consistent comfort and a wide, soft waistband reminiscent of [yoga leggings](#). Additionally, the Quest Shorts have reflective detailing for safety during low-light rides and silicone leg grippers to prevent them from riding up and causing you to chafe.

Beloved by customers, reviews reveal that people love the fit and price. Many appreciate the softness and flexibility of these shorts and the comfort of the padding. That said, some reviewers say that the waistband occasionally rolls down. All in all, this is a great entry-level product for people looking for their first pair of cycling shorts, as well as athletes who don’t have the budget to dish out \$100 or more for a pair of shorts.

Specs

List Price:	\$60
Materials:	80% recycled nylon, 20% spandex
Inseam(s):	8.5 in.
Sizes:	XS-XXXL

[Buy From Pearl iZUMi »](#)

Best for Mountain Biking

Backcountry MTB 9-Inch Slickrock With MTB B...

**PROS:**

- ✓ Baggy short and bib combo is ideal for trail riding
- ✓ Shorts are made of abrasion-resistant material
- ✓ Protects from sunburn and scrapes
- ✓ Lightweight and breathable bib

CONS:

- ✗ Slim fit may not work for larger thighs
- ✗ Combo is pricey

[Buy From Backcountry.com](#)

Unlike the form-fitting, ultra-aerodynamic getups of road riders and triathletes, mountain bikers wear loose, baggy clothing. This is for a few reasons, with the primary one being that mountain bike clothing is made of thicker, more abrasion-resistant material to better protect you from cuts and scrapes if you fall. The baggier clothing also tends to cover more skin, protecting mountain bikers from sunburn and any clothing underneath – like

a bib with a chamois – from ripping should the rider fall. Bib shorts and cycling base layers tend to be quite thin for comfort and breathability, so they're prone to ripping on trail surfaces.

All that said, one of the best mountain biking short combos is the Backcountry MTB 9-Inch Slickrock 9-inch With the MTB Bib Short Liner. This kit provides comfort in the saddle thanks to the bib liner, as well as protection from abrasions and sunburn thanks to the baggy outer layer.

Andrea Green, an avid mountain biker based in California, regularly wears this kit and says that the Slickrock shorts "are lightweight and breathable, not to mention super stretchy." She likes the zippered pockets, saying they're a "must if you want to bring your phone but not a full pack on a short ride."

Green adds: "I also really appreciate the buckle on the waist. Some of my other shorts pop open or unzip as I ride, and there is no issue with these. The length is great if you like longer shorts, but Backcountry also makes a 5-inch and 7-inch version, so there's a length for any preference." She says the material is great, too, because you can easily wipe or brush dirt and dust off. There's venting between the thighs and on the lower back. "It really helps with the overall breathability," according to Green.

The Bib Short Liner is worn underneath the baggy Slickrock shorts. Green says they're comfortable and run true to size. "I like the length of the shorts: Not too short but not too long that they're sticking out of your MTB shorts," she says. "The shoulder straps feel like they're barely there but super snug and don't rub while riding." Additionally, "The shorts also hug my stomach in all the right places without being too tight and the padding on the booty is enough to protect but doesn't feel like a diaper." Made with a light and breathable material, they support airflow while keeping you comfortable for long trail rides.

Specs

Specs (Shorts)

- List Price: \$99

- Materials: 85% recycled nylon, 15% spandex, durable water-repellent (DWR) treatment free of per- and poly-fluorinated chemicals (PFC)
- Inseam(s): 9 in.
- Sizes: XS-XXL

[EXPAND LIST](#) ▾[Buy From Backcountry.Com »](#)

Best for Long-Distance Riding

Athlos Split-Zero Bib Shorts »



PROS:

- ✓ Incredibly comfortable chamois
- ✓ No chafing
- ✓ Smooth but secure leg grippers

CONS:

- ✗ Hard to find and buy online
- ✗ No pockets

[Buy Women's From Athlos](#)[Buy Men's From Athlos](#)

- ✓ Soft, flexible bib straps won't dig in
- ✓ Mesh bib back for breathability
- ✓ Reasonably priced

The Athlos Split-Zero Bib Shorts quickly became a favorite of mine after starting the sports of road cycling and triathlons. In particular, they're my go-to for long (50- to 70-mile) Sunday morning training rides for Ironman 70.3 Augusta thanks to their unbeatable comfort and flexibility.

Made with an extremely lightweight fabric – and a mesh backing on the bib portion – the Athlos Split-Zero Bib is incredibly breathable and wicks away sweat well, a major plus for long rides on hot or humid days. They're also high-stretch so they move with you and don't limit your range of motion. The leg grippers are wide, soft, and flexible so they stay in place without causing the dreaded "sausage leg" – an uncomfortable bulge that occurs when a leg gripper cuts into your thighs.

The chamois is dense but not bulky, providing comfort while preventing unwanted friction between your body and the saddle. The Athlos Split-Zero Bib Shorts feature flatlock stitching throughout to reduce the chance of chafing, and the straps are soft and stretchy so they don't dig into your skin.

Athlos specializes in custom cycling gear, and, while there's no minimum to order, the process can be a bit cumbersome. Sometimes, Athlos sells leftover stock from large orders online. They come at a reduced cost, but you won't get any choice about the color or design. Still, because they're comfortable and perform so well – and have been through dozens of 50-mile rides or longer and are holding up excellently – I highly recommend them for long-distance rides.

Specs

List Price:

\$85

Materials: High Power Compression fabric (86% polyester, 14% spandex) and A-Vent Mesh (80% nylon, 20% spandex)

Inseam(s): 8.5 in.

Sizes: XXS-XXL

[Buy Women's From Athlos »](#)

Best for Triathlons

Tres Piñas Women's Aero Tri Suit »



PROS:

- ✓ Triathlon-specific chamois
- ✓ Large storage pocket
- ✓ Full-zip design

CONS:

- ✗ Expensive
- ✗ 6-inch inseam too short for some athletes

- ✓ Makes race transitions easy
- ✓ Wide leg gripper
- ✓ Chamois isn't too bulky for running
- ✓ Fun, vibrant prints and colors

[Buy From Tres Pinas](#)

The Tres Piñas Aero Tri Suit is the kit I wore for most of my training for Ironman Augusta 70.3 and various Olympic-distance races. It remains my favorite tri-suit of the three that I own due largely to its great fit, full zipper, lightweight fabric, large storage pocket, and triathlon-specific chamois.

The chamois is designed to provide increased comfort on a triathlon (time trial) bike, on which athletes assume the “aero” position. In this position, the athlete is bent forward with a nearly flat back, placing more pressure on the front of the pelvis. A triathlon chamois has more front-centered padding than a road cycling chamois to accommodate this. Of all the road and triathlon kits I own, the Aero Tri Suit is the kit I prefer for long rides on my triathlon bike.

In addition to the comfortable chamois, the Aero Tri Suit features ultragrippy leg grippers that keep the shorts in place during all three disciplines: swimming, biking, and running. The design includes a full zipper from collar to waist, unlike many tri-suits that don't fully unzip. This makes it much easier to get the tri-suit on and off.

The Aero suit has a large storage pocket on the back for long training sessions or races. It can hold multiple energy gels, electrolyte caplets or powder sticks, and essentials like phones and car keys.

Tres Piñas doesn't disclose the specific materials used to make this suit online; the brand only specifies that the suits are made from “the highest-quality Italian fabrics.” The fabrics are, indeed, high-quality: The suit is extremely lightweight, breathable, flexible, and soft.

Specs

List Price:	\$269
Materials:	Italian fabrics
Inseam(s):	6 in.
Sizes:	XXS-XXL

[Buy From Tres Pinas »](#)

Best Bib-Style

Tres Piñas Women’s Pro Bibs »



PROS:	CONS:
✓ Thick and strong but stretchy bib straps	✗ Shorter inseam (6 inches)
✓ Mesh bib panel	✗ Materials not disclosed

- ✓

Thick opaque fabric
- ✗

Expensive
- ✓

Ideal chamois for road biking
- ✓

Durable double-stitched seams

Buy From Tres Piñas

Tres Piñas Women’s Pro Bibs are a staple in my cycling kit rotation. These bibs are some of the most comfortable that I own. They’re a great fit for women with larger or muscular thighs because the leg opening is wider than the equivalent size in many brands and the leg grippers won’t dig into your skin. The inseam length is shorter than average at about 6 inches long, but I find it sufficiently long enough to prevent chafing between my legs and the saddle of the bike. Taller individuals or those with longer legs may find the inseam too short.

One of my favorite features of the Tres Piñas Women’s Pro Bibs is the thick but breathable fabric. The fabric is compressive and durable but doesn’t limit your range of motion or cause sweat buildup. Additionally, the bib features a mesh back panel to increase breathability.

The chamois on these bibs is better suited to [road bikes](#) versus triathlon bikes because the majority of the padding is rear-centered and designed for a comparatively upright riding position. These bike shorts are expensive at a list price of \$195, but I have worn them so many times that they’ve proven worth the investment.

Specs

List Price:	\$195
Materials:	Italian fabrics
Inseam(s):	6 in.
Sizes:	XXS-XL

[Buy From Tres Pinas »](#)

Best for Gym

Senita Athletics Baseline Shorts 7-Inch »



PROS:

- ✓ High-waisted design for full coverage
- ✓ Great price
- ✓ 7-inch inseam
- ✓ "Squat-proof"
- ✓ Four-way stretch fabric
- ✓ "Stay-put" waistband
- ✓ Pockets
- ✓ Compressive material

CONS:

- ✗ Seamed waistband may not be for everyone
- ✗ Don't have chamois

[Buy From Senita](#)

Senita Athletics makes affordable, high-performing workout clothes. The Baseline Shorts are my go-to pair for gym workouts and running. They don't have a chamois so they're not ideal for riding unless your bike or stationary bike has a wide padded seat.

They're available in two inseam lengths (5 and 7 inches), though I prefer the 7-inch version because I have longer legs and find the longer inseam better prevents chafing while exercising. These shorts are 100% "squat-proof," meaning the compressive material won't ride up in the leg or slip down at the waist while squatting. The fabric is also fully opaque, so you don't have to worry about exposure.

Designed with a high-rise waistband and strong seams, I admire the versatility of the Baseline Shorts so much that I own three pairs: two of the 7-inch length and one of the 5-inch length. They're available in many colors and patterns so there's something for every gym style. Keep in mind that the Baseline Shorts do have a waistband seam and a center seam, which some may find uncomfortable, but Senita Athletics offers several seamless short options, too.

Specs

List Price:	\$32
Materials:	72% polyester, 28% spandex
Inseam(s):	5 or 7 in.
Sizes:	XXS-XXL

[Buy From Senita »](#)

The Bottom Line

The best overall bike shorts are the Rapha Women's Core Bib Shorts. They're well built and come at a reasonable price for the quality and comfort.

Things To Consider When Buying Bike Shorts

Claire Zecher, cycling performance coach at Claire Zecher Coaching, says the concept of cycling shorts is often misunderstood. "The focus is often on aesthetics and not the function behind the technology of the shorts," she says. "With cycling shorts, it's definitely true that you get what you pay for; however, finding the right fit for each individual is so important."

Given that everybody is different and there are different needs for different types of riding, "it can seem like an impossible task to find the right shorts for different bodies," Zecher says. "However there are a few key things to look for that will have a rider feeling comfortable, confident, and supported."

Comfort and Fit: "If you've ever experienced the discomfort of riding your bike for more than 20 minutes on a racing bicycle saddle in a pair of running shorts or workout tights, you'll understand the necessity of cycling-specific apparel," says Doug Guthrie, founder of GU3 Training and a U.S. Masters certified coach.

"Originally crafted from woolen material with a chamois pad to combat chafing, cycling shorts have come a long way," he says. "Today, they're designed with advanced materials and pads that not only enhance comfort but also allow cyclists to ride for longer periods with increased performance."

Since comfort is so subjective, it's hard to recommend exact features for this factor. In general, though, you want something form-fitting enough to reduce friction but not so tight that it squeezes your skin to the point of bulging or pain. One big thing to decide on is whether you want shorts or bibs. Shorts are just shorts, while bibs are shorts with straps worn over the shoulders. This feature keeps the shorts in place better than just regular shorts.

Inseam Length: The ideal inseam length is subjective, but the most common lengths are between 7 and 9 inches. Shorter athletes may want a short inseam, while taller

athletes may look for an inseam of up to 11 inches. The important thing is that your shorts are long enough to prevent friction between the skin on your inner thighs and the bike seat. That'll cause chafing, which is uncomfortable at best and painful and performance-inhibiting at worst.

Breathability and Aerodynamics: If you're a competitive cyclist, you'll be concerned with these two factors. Breathability is important for staying comfortable in hot weather and on long rides. Look for designs with mesh panels and lightweight materials that wick sweat well.

As for aerodynamics, Guthrie says high-tech materials and fit can significantly impact speed. "It's not uncommon for a time trial or tour stage to be decided by less than a second in a day that may span over a hundred miles," he says. "This is why manufacturers are constantly innovating the design of helmets, bike frames, wheels, tires, and cycling apparel."

"The tight fit of most cycling bottoms reduces wind drag, allowing the cyclist to ride faster with the same amount of input," he explains. "The materials are a blend of fabrics that encourage wicking and breathability, as well as compression, which promotes better blood flow and reduces friction and chafing."

Padding: There are a few basic chamois designs for cycling shorts, Guthrie says: "Shorts are tight-fitting spandex material with an internal pad of varying thickness depending on the designated use."

"For triathlon cycling, the pad is very minimal because it is worn for all three of the sports in triathlon, swim, bike, and run, so it must be suitable to protect and pad for the bike but be small enough that you can swim and run in the same shorts throughout the race," he explains.

"Cycling-specific shorts are made from the same material but have a thicker pad, providing more comfort for extended riding," he continues, and "mountain bikers wear baggy shorts made from high-tech material but are long, allowing the rider more protection when riding in the woods and on trails." Often, mountain bikers wear a bib beneath the baggy shorts for comfort during longer rides.

Durability: Cycling shorts, even budget models, are expensive investments so you want them to last a long time, which is where the durability factor comes in. "The bottom line is you will get what you pay for," Guthrie says. "Investing in super high-

quality manufactured cycling apparel will make cycling much more enjoyable, and if you take the proper care, the investment should last for many years.” Durable fabrics are abrasion-resistant and will resist fraying or becoming stretched out to the point of not being form-fitting.

Pockets and Storage: Storage needs depend on the type of riding you’re doing and how far you’re going. Typically, bibs themselves don’t have pockets, although that’s not always the case. Cycling jerseys have pockets, and triathlon suits generally feature pockets, too. Mountain biking shorts typically have four pockets (two on the thighs and two in the back).

Some cyclists prefer to carry their nutrition, gear, and personal items in other ways. For instance, road and triathlon bikes have bottle cages and specific compartments for storing nutrition. Saddle bags are another option. It’s not uncommon for mountain bikers to wear [fanny packs](#), vests, or small backpacks.

Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF): Fabrics with a UPF rating of 50 or higher are ideal for riding in sunny, hot conditions.

How We Chose the Best Bike Shorts

In addition to the author’s personal experience with some of the cycling shorts on this list, she spoke with fellow triathletes and cyclists about their favorite bike shorts for additional insights: [Claire Zecher](#), an endurance performance coach who has more than 25 years of cycling experience, and [Doug Guthrie](#), a triathlon coach who has coached numerous individuals through the Ironman World Championships in Kona, Hawaii (and is a six-time Kona finisher himself).

WHY SHOULD YOU TRUST US?

The author of this guide, [Amanda Capritto](#), who contributed original photography to this piece, has ridden road, triathlon, and mountain bikes for several years. She’s spent countless hours on all of her three bikes and completed several triathlon races, including an Ironman 70.3 distance. She has ridden in various conditions from the hot humid climate in South and Central Florida to the arid deserts in Arizona to the alpine landscapes in Washington state. Additionally, Amanda is a commerce writer

and journalist by trade and has seven years of experience testing gear and reviewing products.

[Marlo Jappen Porto](#), the editor of this piece, covers fitness as a home goods editor at 360 Reviews. She has edited reviews on various health and wellness products including [yoga mats](#), [hiking boots](#), and [elliptical machines](#).

FAQ

Should I wear bike shorts or a bike bib?



What's the purpose of a chamois?



How do you wash bike shorts?



About Our Team



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Contributor



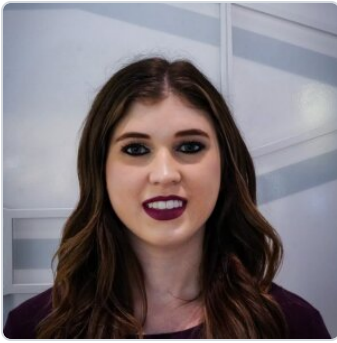
Amanda Capritto is a content writer and journalist with extensive experience covering health, fitness, outdoors, and nutrition. She is a certified personal trainer, a sports nutrition coach, and the founder of Smarter Sweat, a fitness coaching business where she focuses on helping individuals reach their full potential in the outdoors.

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