

The Race of Truth

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Winter Cycling Review #2: Bar Mitts

February 4, 2013

I can go ahead and spoil this review as I've done with others: Bar Mitts are awesome. If you ride in cold weather, you need some. Period.

In the event you're not sold already, let me elaborate. Bar Mitts are big neoprene mitts that fit over your handlebars. Here's what the [Bar Mitts](#) people have to say about their product:

Bar Mitts (AKA Moose Mitts, Pogies & Climits) are Bicycle Handlebar Mittens that attach to your drop style or mountain/commuter style handlebars. The Bar Mitts keep your hands warm while riding and allow you to use a very lightweight glove, increasing dexterity, even in the coldest of weather. Also, people who suffer from Raynaud's or numb, cold hands due to the cold, wind, rain or snow can continue to ride and train throughout the Fall and Winter.

I was diagnosed with Raynaud's Syndrome a few years back and have spent that time trying to find sufficiently warm handgear for all sorts of endeavors (not least of which is simply keeping my driveway clear of the copious snow we get). Most of my regular mittens and gloves use Primaloft instead of Thinsulate, because most Thinsulate gloves just aren't warm enough for me. Even sitting here in a 70°F office typing, my fingers are cold. I had previously ridden into work in cooler temperatures with a pair of [Pearl Izumi Barrier](#) gloves (mine are a slightly older version than those linked) and still got into the office with really chilly digits. I never really liked riding with such thick gloves on either. Christmas brought me a pair of Bar Mitts and I couldn't be happier.

We've been in the midst of a massive cold streak up here. This morning, the absolute air temperature was 0°F. The Bar Mitts were on and I was wearing my Specialized Equinox gloves (similar to the current [Deflect](#) gloves). These gloves are usually rated down to 45°F, which makes them my go-to cyclocross gloves. But even with the frigid morning temperatures, my hands were completely comfortable. Had I been wearing any other glove I own, I would not have been able to feel my fingers.

I don't feel like they compromise dexterity or control of the bike. Riding on the snowpack that we call a "road" up here means constant steering input and body english to keep the bike pointed the direction you want to go. Emergency stops haven't been a problem yet. I haven't crashed with them yet, but can see how they might restrict your ability to use your hands and arms to break your fall. Getting in and out on a normal basis is pretty easy. Standing up to climb isn't so bad, though I'm thinking I need a stem with a little more rise to keep myself comfortable. The website claims, "Bar Mitts are easily installed and removed," and I suppose that's a relative statement. They do go on without tools, but you're not going to want to be going back and forth, off and on each day. At least, I don't. Maybe that's the Specialized S-wrap and Bar Gel I use. There's even a nice little strip of reflective material on the front to keep you visible.

Can I come up with any complaints? Let's see. They're definitely not good looking. It's a big hunk of neoprene attached to your bike. Frankly, they're so functional I don't care. The only thing that might be cool is some different colors of neoprene, just for the heck of it. Who wouldn't want a little pizzaz on the bike? They might even be more visible.

The pair I have is the model with Shimano/SRAM/Campy with internally routed cables, since they're on a singlespeed. Consequently I can't speak to the ease of shifting, but braking is unimpaired.



So what are you waiting for? Go get some!

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