



Osprey Viper 5 Hydration Pack Review



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Few products are as ubiquitous nowadays as the hydration pack. There are as many pack styles as there are preferences, so it's definitely a crowded place for a company to compete. Naturally, Osprey is one of the big players in the market and their Viper 5 fits the fast-and-light niche that I'm so fond of.

Viper 5 is Clever, Fast and Full-featured

The Viper 5 is the most compact backpack in Osprey's entire line-up so it's also their very lightest offering. The humble hydration pack is elevated to new levels of functionality by Osprey's unique take on design and construction – throughout the tiny pack there are a host of clever features and thoughtful design touches that provide for a great user experience.

The basic layout of the pack is pretty simple – there's the main hydration compartment, a small protective pocket for glasses and devices, an open shove-it pocket and a storage compartment with several pockets and keepers. The hydration pocket is special in that the zipper travels all the way down the right strap, thereby keeping the hose in-place and removing the hassle of having to thread it through a small opening (so nice). The slash pocket is just deep enough for a large phone so your valuables don't rattle around while riding – it's worth noting that Osprey lined the pocket with a special fabric that won't damage lenses or screens. The shove-it pocket is roomy enough for a light shell and it has extensive drainage to manage rain. The final organizational pocket has two mesh pockets, a key keeper and plenty of space for all of the essentials.

I used the pack while riding and snowshoeing – on the bike, there was plenty of room for several bars, my CO2 canisters and chuck. The shove-it pocket came in handy for storing an extra layer for the descent and I was really pleased with how the pack moves. It's so small and low-profile that it can handle some serious gymnastics without affecting balance or momentum in the least. I also love the trademarked 'LidLock' system – it's an elastic keeper and quickly and securely fastens a helmet onto your pack. It works perfectly with my [Giro Hex](#). The pack is really crammed with design features – the sternum strap, for instance, has a magnetic pad that the included Hydraulics reservoir hose attaches to. The straps and back panels themselves are constructed of uber-light foam that's been die-cut to provide both structure and airflow.

The Bottom Line

If you're looking for a trusty companion for adventures after work or Saturday assaults, the Viper 5 is a great option at a perfect size. It's obvious that the pack was designed by people who know what we want on the trails, as the plethora of useful features attests. The pack isn't any featherweight, but for the proliferation of features and comfortable fit the Viper 5 is hard to beat.

