



Bicycling

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Gear: Thirst Quenchers

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Thirst Quenchers

Whether you're roaming the city or exploring distant peaks, you'll want the right hydration pack *By Kim Cross*

Size matters Consider how much water you'll need: A two-liter reservoir is good for short trips, but you'll want three or more on longer rides. Just remember that water is heavy—2.2 pounds per liter. If possible, try packs on with weights to see what riding with a load will feel like.

Focus on fit When trying on a pack, tighten the straps and make sure none chafe or bind. The bag should fit your torso's length, and women should look for models with curved straps. Some new models use a triangular bladder that sits lower in the pack, which helps alleviate back pain.

Bladder control? Make sure the reservoir is easy to open and close and that the hose detaches. These features can simplify filling and loading the bladder. Also examine the bite valve. The best ones have a lock to shut off the flow of water so you won't have any accidental drips.

Key Features

- 1. EASY ACCESS** Pockets and other organizing features keep your essentials handy. You'll want a hook to keep your keys secure, a padded pocket for your phone, and loops for a pump.
- 2. VENTILATION** Look for models with ventilation channels—mesh fabric stretched over the back panel to let air flow between your back and the bag—to keep you cooler on warm rides.
- 3. HOSE ROUTING** On some packs, the hose can be routed over only one shoulder. Others let you run it on either side. Try both styles to see which you prefer.

