



TrailRunner

July 2014

Summer 2014 Gear Guide

Featuring: Rev 1.5 – Tester's Choice

Circulation: 37,935

Readership: 113,805





OSPREY
REV 1.5

\$70 | 15.5 oz | ospreypacks.com

From one of the kings of the backpacking world comes the Rev—Osprey's foray into trail-running packs. Available in two sizes, S/M and M/L, the Rev 1.5 comes with a host of handy features that make it suitable for races and training runs alike—a comfortable, low-bounce harness system, a roomy, zippered rear pocket, two mesh sleeves in front and a handy smartphone-touchscreen-compatible flip pocket on the shoulder strap.

The included 1.5-liter reservoir maintains its shape even when empty, and a simple clip system where the hydration tube meets the reservoir allows for hassle-free refilling. Mike especially praised the “no-sway, no-bounce, easy-adjust ride,” the magnetic hydration-tube-to-sternum-strap connector and the quick-detach reservoir system.

We primarily tested the 1.5, though the Rev is also available in 6-, 12-, 18- and 24-liter versions; the 6-liter adds copious amounts of storage, while still riding bounce-free, and is ideal for all-day adventure runs or ultras.

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AMPHIPOD HYDRAFORM HANDHELD ERGO-LITE

\$26 | 16 fl oz | amphipod.com

The 16-ounce capacity bottle is a new size for Amphipod, and a welcome compromise between the traditional 20-ounce bottle (often feels bulky in hand) and the 10-ounce flask (which, at best to us, can seem like too little fluid to justify carrying a handheld).

The “ergonomic” design is not just a marketing gimmick—it really is easier to grip, and even forget its presence, than a traditional, round bottle. The zip pocket on the adjustable strap is big enough for keys and a gel on top.

For \$26, an ergonomic 16-ounce bottle (leak insulation sleeve) outfitted with an iPhone-touchscreen-compatible storage pouch is also available.

ULTIMATE DIRECTION HANDY

\$26 | 20 fl oz | ultimatedirection.com

Part of Ultimate Direction's female-specific Jenny Collection, the Handy is available in both 10- and 20-ounce sizes. The adjustable hand strap makes for easy, secure toting, and a stretchy-mesh zip pocket accommodates a laudable quantity of gels and other small essentials. A wide, easy-on/off lid makes refilling at aid stations a breeze.

Our only complaint: While the leak-proof bite valve is an innovative design, the slippery nozzle requires a tug in order to “top”—which can be frustratingly difficult with teeth or sweaty hands.

HYDRAPAK SOFTFLASK

\$20 | 500 ml | hydrapak.com

Available in 350-, 500- and 750-milliliter versions, the Softflask is made with the same sturdy, flexible, BPA-free plastic as the Hydrapak reservoirs found in packs by Ultralight, Nathan, Ultimate Direction and other manufacturers.

It collapses as you drink, reducing volume and eliminating the slosh effect of traditional bottles. It can be used for water, electrolyte brew or diluted gel—allowing for easy, steady fueling; and no messing with sticky gel packets on the go.

We didn't have it as a handheld, unfortunately, once partially empty, the flask feels floppy in hand—and, in freezing temps, more wobbly like a long-leak. However, it works great in the front-loading pockets of a pack. The bite valve is brilliantly designed—easy to get water from and, in our experience, leak-proof. And because the Softflask is dishwasher-safe, it's a cinch to clean out gummy gel residue.

FITLITEC QUENCH HYDRATION BELT

\$49 | 6.9 oz | fitlites.com

Don't like the feeling of a full pack on your back, but heading out long enough to need ample water and supplies? Check out this unique belt from Fitlitec. The dual bottle holders accommodate 12- to 24-ounce bottles (not included) and zip into individual pockets during run-ups, helping eliminate bounce.

Race bib toggles mean there's no need to sweat it out in a T-shirt to stick safety pins to your favorite race-day apparel. The chunky buckle allows easy adjustment and gear access mid-run, and the rear zip pouch is large enough for smartphones, an uncompromising inner pocket stashes cash, cards or keys.

It's available in two sizes: S/M and L/XL.

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