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Essentials: Mountain Biking

Featuring: Zealot

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## Essentials: Mountain Biking

Our office is full of mountain bike enthusiasts who are all too happy to watch the last patches of snow melt off the trails. Right about now, they're as giddy as we see them all year, thanks in large part to the weekly staff rides that started up a few weeks ago. We asked the staff-ride ringleader, fat-tire fanatic Tony Wilhelms what tools he carries to keep himself out of a pickle. Here they are. Don't leave the trailhead without them.

### Hydration Equipped Backpack: Osprey Zealot

When you're two-wheeling downhill over rocks and ruts, a pack that bounces around or throws off your balance can be a crash waiting to happen. Osprey's Zealot is designed specifically for mountain bikers; it has a slim design that keeps it centered and close to your body. As you'd expect, it includes a hydration reservoir and has separate sleeve with a drainage spout in case the bladder gets punctured or springs a leak. Pockets galore, sure, but it's the placement not the quantity that won Tony over. A small pouch on the shoulder strap, for example, is a good place for him to stash and easily reach his energy snacks without missing a pedal stroke. And the piece de resistance? A magnetic interface between the drinking tube and the shoulder strap that keeps the tube from flapping in your face or out of reach. Conclusion: The Osprey design team spends plenty of time on the single track and knows what riders want. **Price:** \$129 (10 liter), \$149 (16 liter)

