

The background of the page features a silhouette of a motorcyclist on a road at dusk or dawn. To the left, there is a road signpost with two signs. The overall scene is dark and atmospheric, with the sky showing a gradient of light from the horizon.

Motorcycle Rider's Glove Buying Guide

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GOAL OF THIS GUIDE: INTRODUCTION

It doesn't matter if you're an old hand at motorcycling, or if you've just bought your first bike. There are hundreds of brands and styles of motorcycle gloves to choose from.

Having so many choices can be confusing!

In this guide, we'll answer the following questions:

- What to look for in a motorcycle glove?
- Which features protect from injury, weather and hand fatigue?
- What's the difference between a glove for \$50, and one that costs twice as much?
- Which design features and materials are "must have's" for your style of riding, and which are simply cosmetic?

Are you a touring rider?

Do you ride the trails as an adventure rider?

Are you an sport rider, pushing your skills to the limit?

Regardless of your preferred style of riding, this guide is designed to help you make an informed choice. No hype. Just honest talk about motorcycle gloves.

Read on, and happy riding!

THE BASICS: WHY MOTORCYCLE GLOVES?

Some riders ask us:
Do I really need motorcycle gloves?

The answer is yes, you do.

Hands are vulnerable while riding. A good motorcycle glove will ensure:

- **Protection from road rash ... or worse**
Accidents do happen. Most new riders experience an accident within their first 3 months of riding. Your natural instinct is to throw your hands out in front of you to protect yourself in a fall. The right gloves provide skin protection and prevent abrasion injuries on the palms and fingers.
- **Protection from weather**
Sun, wind, rain, cold and hail ... Mother Nature is unpredictable during a ride, and underpasses can be few and far between. But if you have the right gloves and gear for the elements, life hardly gets any sweeter than that.
- **Protection on the road, trails and track**
When following a truck or other type of vehicle, small rocks, retread from tires, nuts, bolts and a limitless variety of road hazards get thrown at you. On the trails and on the track, well-placed padding on your hands makes all the difference.
- **Relief from hand fatigue**
Some gloves incorporate gel, padding, curved fingers and other features for comfort around the grips. With these features, hand fatigue and numbness can virtually be eliminated during your ride.
- **Improved control**
Great TACTILE SENSATION for the throttle and other hand controls are a must. Some motorcycle gloves have strategically textured palms and fingers, for improved grip and control.



HOW TO CHOOSE? THREE KEY FACTORS:

Selecting a glove is a personal choice. Everyone's budget -- and need for comfort, style, and safety while riding -- is a little different.

Make sure to choose a glove with the features you need for the type of riding you do, and the protection you need to keep hands safe.

At it's most basic level, there are three basic considerations: **Budget**, **Weather Conditions**, and **Personal Factors**.

Budget:

Gloves can cost \$15 ... or \$300! Value is in the eye – or the hand – of the beholder. Like anything, it boils down to the combination of workmanship, materials, and features that are right for YOU.

Premium features like more insulation, breathable liners, or more armor come with a price tag. And, if the gloves are sporting a fancy brand name, you will pay for that too. The same quality glove can cost \$20-\$30 more for the brand name.

Once you determine what's most important to you, there will certainly be a glove that fits both that and your budget.

How much should gloves cost? You'll find lots of choices at all price points.

For instance, all-season gloves in the \$30-\$75 range can range from a very comfortable all-around glove that is reflective, has gel, and leather palms (around \$30) to a rugged all-season glove that is made from leather and Gore-tex inserts (around \$75).

A more specific, highly functional glove, will obviously cost more.



Workmanship and Materials:

The right workmanship and materials can make gloves fit better, and last longer, than others. Take a look at the seams, try them on. Quality gloves feel better on the hand.

Notice details like:

- Fingers that are angled like your hand where they join the palm
- External seams that are less irritating
- Slip proof inserts that won't bunch, shift or move around in the glove.

Features:

Two gloves can look the same, but perform completely differently.

For instance, does a glove that is marked "waterproof" also allow your hands to breathe, or will your hands sweat like crazy?

Premium materials like weatherproofing might not always be visible, but will add to the cost -- and performance -- of the glove.

(See Appendix for some of the most commonly used features and materials)

Your Budget: Bottom line

For under \$50.00, you can get a quality, well fitting glove that provides both protection and comfort while riding.

Set a budget that makes sense for you ... and don't cut corners when it comes to features that enhance safety or comfort.

If you decide to pay more for styling or brand name, that's up to you.



WEATHER

Cold-Weather/Winter Motorcycle Gloves:

- You need warm hands to operate the hand controls and stay comfortable: If you continue to ride in the colder months, it's worth investing in a good cold weather motorcycle glove.
- Look for advanced insulated layers to keep your hands warm
- Special features such as windproofing and waterproofing, provide protection from cold, wind and rain.
- Cold weather gloves should protect you in frigid temps ranging from the low 20s to about 55 degrees Fahrenheit.

All-Weather Motorcycle Gloves:

- All-weather motorcycle gloves should provide all around protection from the elements (wind, rain and cold).
- They'll keep you reasonably comfortable from roughly 35 degrees Fahrenheit to around 60 degrees, without a lot of bulk between you and the handlebars.
- All weather gloves are usually designed to provide warm, breathable yet wicking layered materials to help keep hands dry from both perspiration and precipitation.

Summer Motorcycle Gloves:

- Summer motorcycle gloves are specially constructed to keep your hands cool and protected on summer rides above 65 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Summer features like special vents, mesh, fingerless construction, special textiles for added ventilation to the palm, fingers and the back of your hand, and absorbent materials to wick away sweat.
- In addition to these features, the summer glove should be protective, and provide freedom of motion and tactile feel for the controls.
- A fingerless glove offers a classic way to stay cool and protected at the same time. Comfort and safety features can include perforated leather for ventilation, gel palms, armored knuckles, and more.

Personal Requirements:

Do suffer from vibration? Do you ride on rough terrain? Ride at night?

Here's a summary of special features you might look for, depending on your personal requirements

PROBLEM	SOLUTION	FEATURES TO LOOK FOR:
Fatigue	Flexible materials, padding	Gel pads and extra foam padding on palms.
Cold	Insulation, or added warmth, add a liner layer	Double insulation on fingertips, water proof inserts, Thinsulate materials, hydrofil linings, extra insulation on backs of hand, heated gloves/grips, gauntlets.
Rain, sleet	Waterproofing layer	Gore-tex, Aqua-tex, Dri-lock, depending on your need for breathability, built in goggle wipers.
Heat	Ventilation, Fingerless styles	Nylon mesh, perforated leather, Stretch Nylon fingers, special venting.
Wind	Wind barriers	Wind-stopper, Wind-Tex, Gore-Tex, Aquatex.
Sweat	Fabrics that "breathe", wick moisture and other "airflow" features	Vents, mesh fabrics, materials that "breathe" like Gore-tex, perforated leather, and neoprene.
Vibration	Silicone Gel padding	Gel palms.
Aggressive Riding Conditions, Exposure to road hazards	Armor and other protective features	Hard Kevlar or carbon fiber knuckles, molded soft knuckle protection, skid pads on palms, padding in vulnerable hand areas, Kevlar thread, wrist straps.
Comfort	Padding, comfortable exterior and lining materials, construction that moves with your hand	Soft leathers, soft/stretchy fabrics, gel, extra padding in specific areas, external seams, easy on/off, adjustable wrist straps, box finger construction, seamless palms, elasticized cuffs
Control	Textured gripping materials, strategically placed	Textured palms and fingers, for improved grip and control.
Durability	Rugged construction, durable materials	Leather, tough fabrics like Cordura, double stitched and reinforced seams, use of heavy weight thread
Dusk or Night Riding	reflective features	High visibility fabrics, LED lighting
Access to Electronics	Built in "Touch" features that allow riders to use electronics easily	Gloves with touchscreen and /or Bluetooth capabilities, depending on your needs.

PROTECT YOUR HANDS! SAFETY FEATURES

What special safety features do you require? Some people say this depends on your style of riding. We have a different view!

After all, you can get injured on the road just as easily as on the track ... and you can get the same scrapes as a new rider, as you can with 40 years on the bike! Track racing or cruising, beginning rider or experienced, hands need protection. Here are some important safety features that you might look for based on your type of bike/riding.

Touring/Cruising Riders, look for:

- Gel in the palms to protect from vibration.
- Padding on the back side of each of your fingers and palms; this will protect you in a slide.
- Seasonal features, depending on the conditions you ride in most – ventilation and insulation.
- Gripping textures for better throttle and hand control.
- Reflective materials, to be more visible at night or in foul weather
- Soft materials to protect against skin agitation during high mileage rides.

Adventure/Dual Sport Riders, look for:

- Hard protection in knuckles, wrists, and forearms.
- More rugged features like venting, finger protection, and thumb protection.
- Textured materials on the palms and fingers to provide a grip on the throttle and other hand controls.
- Sweat wiper.
- Floating finger panels or flexible foam padding around knuckles and joints, for greater dexterity.
- Reinforced thumbs, forefingers and heels

Extreme Road/Sport Riders, look for:

- Hand/body armor protection from accidents and road contact.
- Sport riders should look for the best stiff armor your money can buy.



Safety Component Checklist:

- ☐ knuckle protection
- ☐ Added protection in key impact/skid areas
- ☐ padded and covered fingers, hand and palm
- ☐ fabric: cut, abrasion, and puncture resistance
- ☐ hi viz: to be easily seen 24/7

PROPER FIT

It's important to wear motorcycle gloves that fit well.

Ill-fitting gloves are not only uncomfortable, but also a safety hazard because they can cause your hands to become fatigued more quickly. They can also cause cramping of the hand, and numbness that can get in the way of a quick hand response.

How to measure/fit gloves?

Every brand of gloves fit differently. It's important to try them on, to see which brand and style feels best on your hands.

There are some general rules of thumb (no pun intended!):

American Fit vs. European Fit:

As a general rule, "American fit" gloves run a little bigger, and fit North American hands better, than leaner cut, smaller, imported European gloves.

If you are ordering gloves on line, is important to check the manufacturer's size charts, and measure your own hands, as instructed.

Leather vs. Fabric Fit:

New leather gloves should fit on the snug side, as they will stretch to fit your hands as they get "broken in." As a general rule, the softer the leather, the less time it takes to break in.

Textile (fabric) gloves don't need to be broken in, which means their initial fit will not change.

Women's Glove Fit:

Women's hands are not simply a smaller version of men's hands; women need protection from the elements, plus a special fit that takes into account their unique proportions and properties.

For instance, since women wear more rings, there are women's gloves that accommodate that. More women are riding now than ever before, but it can still be hard to find good, fully featured women's gloves that fit.

Look for women's gloves that have the features and fit you want.



Glove Fit Checklist:

- ☐ No bunching in the finger tips or tightness at the knuckles.
- ☐ Should fit well from the 1st day you wear them. Not too tight, not too loose
- ☐ Good dexterity and fine motor control ... the gloves cannot be clumsy!

GLOVE DURABILITY and CARE

How long should motorcycle gloves last? It really depends on the rider. Motorcycle gloves are not like a tire that you can reliably ride on for 20K miles. Some riders change their gloves every year, while others clock 40K miles with a single pair of gloves, and they're still going strong. Also, some gloves take more abuse than others (sport riders, we're looking at you!). As a general rule:

- The glove palm and the clutch fingers gets more wear, so look for gloves with more durable fabrics or leathers, reinforced seams, and stronger threads in those spots.
- Leather, especially higher-end, glove grade leather, should hold up better, but it completely depends on use. As a general rule, look for cowhide, deer-skin, goat, kangaroo and pigskin, which all have durable properties.
- There's no such thing as normal "wear and tear." You might expect \$300 gloves to last longer – but they won't, necessarily!

At the end of the day, only you can be the judge of whether your gloves hold up to your type of riding as expected.

We routinely get letters from riders who have used the same pair of Olympia gloves for years without wearing them out. As they say, your mileage may vary!

Cleaning Instructions:

We wear our gloves a lot ... sometimes daily. We sweat, and they are subject to road grime or dirt from the trails. Taking care of your gloves can keep them looking good and lasting longer.

When it comes to motorcycle gloves, it's best not to machine wash them. That's because of the variety of materials and layered construction -- not all of those interior layers, and technical fabrics, can be cleaned in the same way.

Leather Glove Care:

- Hand wash the inside with mild soap and water
- Use leather cleaner on the outside leather
- Use mild soap on any external fabric
- Air dry only

Fabric Glove Care:

- Hand wash the inside with mild soap and water
- Use mild soap on any external fabric
- Air dry

CHOOSING A GLOVE: BRAND QUALITIES

What are some ways to judge a good motorcycle glove?

Not every company has been making gloves for over 70 years like we have, but there are many fine brands to choose from.

Things to look for before you buy a high performance motorcycle glove:

- A company with a good track record, that has stood the test of time
- A reputable company that stands behind their products
- A guarantee for manufacturing defects

Brand Quality Indicators:

Guarantee:

Look for companies that have a reputation to uphold and stand squarely behind their products.

Premium materials and Construction:

Use of branded materials like Goretex, Thinsulate, Kevlar, Primaloft, Aquatex Thermolite, Holofil, and Dri-lock, are good quality indicators, because companies have to uphold certain manufacturing standards for these material suppliers to allow their brand names to be used.

Style:

Some companies consistently improve and adapt their designs, with an eye towards safety and comfort. Other companies are on the forefront of fashion and style. This is a very personal choice.

Innovation:

You'll want to make sure that the company whose gloves you choose is incorporating the best materials and current methods the industry has to offer.

For instance, Olympia was the first glove company to introduce Gore-tex and gel padding to motorcycle gloves, and one of the first to use Kevlar, reflective technology, molded soft knuckles, double layers of insulation on fingertips, and touch-screen technology, to name a few.



CONCLUSION

More important than what a company says about itself, is what other riders say. Do your homework, check online reviews ... and be sure to leave reviews, too, so other rider's can benefit from your experience.

**We want you to LOVE your gloves ...
whether you buy ours or another brand.**

So shop around, see what's new, read reviews.

Then, make an informed choice. Select a glove that fits your needs and budget, make sure they feel good on, and ...

... Hit the road, knees to the breeze! Ride safe!

ABOUT OLYMPIA GLOVES:

We hope you found this guide helpful!

In our 70+ years of making gloves, there's no glove question that we haven't been asked!

If you still have questions about selecting, fitting, or caring for motorcycle gloves, please get in touch. Email us at: info@olympiagloves.com We're happy to help!

And we hope you'll check out our gear ... durable, high performance gloves that fit perfectly, keep you safe and comfortable on the road, and hold up in a slide. Quality gloves, at a reasonable price.

We appreciate your business.

Ride safe!

-- Roger, and the rest of the team at Olympia Gloves

P.S.

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