

WINTER SOCKS TESTED BY POLICE RIDERS

Want to avoid frozen toes? Humberside's patrol riders assess foot-warming socks

It's one of the agonies of riding in winter: cold toes. There are, if you feel flush, sophisticated solutions such as electrically heated socks or inner soles - but a good pair of socks can often be all you need. As long as it's the right pair of socks.

And the humble sock, if it's designed for a performance role like this, can be a very hi-tech garment indeed. Far from humble, in fact. Yes, it needs to be warm, but a sock also needs to breathe, stretch, support - and it must do all of this without bunching up to form ridges that can put pressure on the foot or calf and without being

so tight that it restricts circulation.

This means that, rather than being a simple knitted tube with a bend in the middle, modern specialist socks use sections of varying technical materials to give different characteristics in different areas. Some advanced socks use combinations of metal threads and thermals threads to trap heat.

All of which is a very roundabout way of explaining why some of these socks retail for more than £15 a pair. That's the thing with technology: it's rarely cheap. But then, if it keeps your toes toasty at the end of a long winter's ride, it's absolutely priceless.



OUR TESTERS

We gave the motorcycle riders of the Humberside Police Force our socks and asked them to rate each pair for fit, material feel and warmth, giving us comments about comfort. They were out there doing all-day tests on the socks when the first cold snap at

the end of October dumped a sprinkling of snow on high ground. Experts on all things motorcycling, the Humberside bike team will be sharing their knowledge with riders on the BikeSafe scheme in 2009. For more information see www.bikesafe.co.uk

Frank Thomas Anti Freeze long sock

£14.99 www.frank-thomas.co.uk

Soft, stretchable multi-section sock. All testers praised the fit, warmth and luxurious feel of the material.

"Wonderful - luxurious, warm, comfortable.

Very impressed." **Glen Dennis**

"A lovely fitting sock. It's warm enough but not sweaty.

Fits well in the boot." **Simon Carlisle**



X Socks Ski Adrenalin

£19.50 www.specialistsocks.co.uk

Very hi-tech multi-section sock designed for serious skiers. Testers praised the fit and warmth and all felt the material was pleasant.

"The best sock I tested - took it out on the coldest day and was still lovely and warm. A good, snug fit but not too tight.

Held up nicely." **Simon Carlisle**
"Nice, snug fit and decent length to the knee. Comfy, warm sock."

Vince Worrall



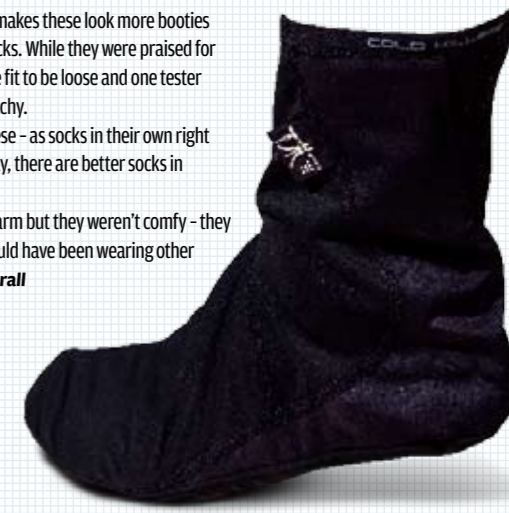
Cold Killers Hot Socks

£14.99 www.planet-knox.com

Hi-tech thermal material makes these look more booties rather than traditional socks. While they were praised for warmth, testers found the fit to be loose and one tester felt the material was scratchy.

"Not sure how to wear these - as socks in their own right or as oversocks. Either way, there are better socks in this group." **Glen Dennis**

"They did keep my feet warm but they weren't comfy - they crinkled up and I felt I should have been wearing other socks as well." **Vince Worrall**



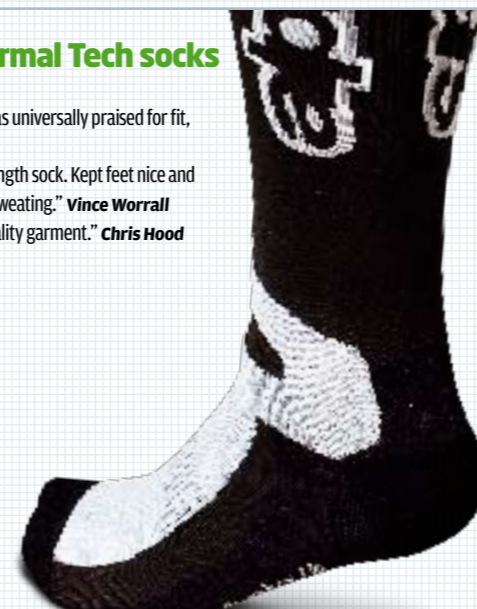
Alpinestars Thermal Tech socks

£15.95 www.alpinestars.com

Long, soft, multi-section sock was universally praised for fit, comfort and temperature.

"Nice snug, well-shaped knee-length sock. Kept feet nice and warm and didn't crinkle up. No sweating." **Vince Worrall**

"Good fit, warm and comfy - quality garment." **Chris Hood**



EDZ Thermal Boot Socks

£10 www.edz.biz

Simple single-section thermal sock. Quality of fit and material was praised by all testers, though one found it almost too warm.

"A real heavy-duty sock. Fitted well and felt comfy but did make my feet sweat." **Vince Worrall**



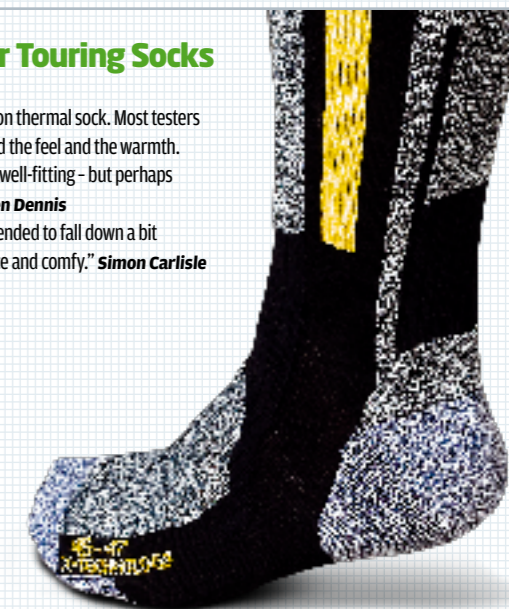
Rev'it Winter Touring Socks

£24.99 www.revit.nl

Sophisticated multi-section thermal sock. Most testers liked the fit and all praised the feel and the warmth.

"Comfortable, warm and well-fitting - but perhaps a bit too long for me." **Glen Dennis**

"A good, warm sock but tended to fall down a bit in the boot. Otherwise nice and comfy." **Simon Carlisle**



Bridgedale Endurance Summit Knee socks

£16.89 www.specialistsocks.co.uk

Hi-tech multi-section mountaineering sock. Every tester praised it for the pleasant feel of the material, warmth and fit.

"Very comfortable, not scratchy, does everything it says it should.

Very good to wear." **Glen Dennis**

"Good-fitting knee-sock kept feet warm but not sweaty. Felt cushioned and thick." **Vince Worrall**



Oxford Ox Socks

£12.99 (twin pack) www.oxprods.com

Multi-section thermal socks come in twin-pack. Testers praised warmth, but fit and material (one felt it was scratchy) divided opinion.

"Nice sock - very long but a bit loose at the toes.

Toasty warm." **Chris Hood**

"Cuff felt a little tight but kept feet warm." **Martin Moore**



Sealskinz Mid Thermal Sock

£25 www.sealskinz.com

Clever waterproof sock with thermal properties. All testers praised the warmth and feel of the material, though one tester felt the fit was a bit loose.

"Truly waterproof and warm. Great sock, very useful - wish I'd found them earlier." **Glen Dennis**

"Felt as if I was putting my feet into plastic bags. They crinkled up under the toes. They kept my feet warm but they're short fitting and didn't rise above the boot tops." **Vince Worrall**

