



ULTIMATE PEDAL GUIDE

Many of our readers are confused about pedal selection. There are so many options for release mechanisms, platforms, pins and debris deflection. For this test we rode in fairly dry conditions. We used the same shoes throughout the entire test for consistency and focused on engagement and release characteristics. Your experiences may differ if you ride in wet and muddy terrain. SPD cleats are not ideal in muddy conditions, while Time or HT cleats are

better designed to keep soil from accumulating. Shoes are another huge factor. The curve of the sole, stiffness, material and size will change a number of characteristics for clipping in, traction and disengagement. We will tell you how each pedal rides and describe the ease and comfort of the entry and release. Take our opinions, and your terrain and shoe selection into consideration, and you should have all the information you need to choose the right clipless pedals for you.

Time

Time began over 30 years ago in Nevers, France and was a pioneer of the automatic (clipless) pedal. We put Time's platform trail pedals and cross-country race pedals to the test.

ATAC Speciale

Tech features: The Time ATAC Speciale has a double-sided, 6106-T6 aluminum body; oversized, hollow-steel axle; and steel bearings. Additional features include Time's ATAC-patented engagement system, replaceable grip pins and a micro-adjustable Allen-bolt tension spring. The pedals are available in red, blue and dark grey. The pedals use a two-bolt, brass, proprietary ATAC cleat system designed for traditional MTB clip shoes. With a footprint of

113 x 749 x 36mm, the pedals weigh 412 grams per pair and sell for \$275.

Field test results: The engagement is simple and effective and resists mud and debris, making it extremely easy to use in adverse conditions. The Time ATAC Speciale has a nearly frictionless feel through the center of the pedal float. We ran our spring tension at 540 degrees (one and a half turns) from open out of the recommended 720 degrees (two full turns) without any unwanted disengagement. The release was firm and predictable. At first it felt like it might need more tension with the free float and smooth release, but after riding aggressively and not unclipping, even on big turning jumps, we decided that more tension would not be necessary. By design, pedal strikes were nearly nonexistent with the pedal's narrow leading edge and

width. Riders with a lot of body movement will love this pedal and the ability to move around a lot while staying clipped in. Beginners will love the ease of release at lower tensions.



ATAC XC8

Tech features: The Time ATAC XC8 has a double-sided carbon body; oversized, hollow-steel axle; steel bearings; Time ATAC-patented engagement system; and a micro-adjustable Allen-bolt tension spring. The pedals are available in black only. They use a two-bolt, brass, proprietary ATAC



cleat system designed for traditional MTB clip shoes. With a footprint of 60 x 72 x 36mm, the pedals weigh 291 grams per pair. MSRP is \$180.

Field test results: The Time ATAC XC8 has a surprisingly easy engagement on the ATAC receiving spring, one of the easiest non-platform entries. With three progressive clicks of tension, we ran ours with the easiest setting, as it came stock out of the box. The float had very minimal resistance and allowed a lot of hip motion without unclipping at all, yet still had a very smooth and confident release point. This is one of the best pedals on the market in wet and muddy conditions. Our Sidi test shoe felt right at home on this pedal without pins or a platform. Pedal strikes were nearly nonexistent due to the minimalist body and narrow width. Although this was designed as a

pro cross-country pedal, beginners will be extremely comfortable and confident with the engagement and release.

Overall comparison: It is extremely difficult to choose between these two pedals. Aesthetically, the ATAC Speciale is one of the most beautifully designed pedals, but the ATAC X8 has a technically designed carbon body. Both pedals have very similar float feelings, and the engagement and disengagement are nearly the same. The ATAC Speciale platform provides durability, but the ATAC X8's light weight is a real plus. Both pedals had nearly the same feel once we were clipped in and riding. Because the pins and platform didn't make contact with our test shoe, we preferred the ATAC X8. We may have chosen differently if we were testing with a softer-soled shoe. Either way, this was an extremely close call.

Xpedo

Xpedo has been making pedals for over 30 years and is the world's largest pedal manufacturer.

Xpedo GFX

Tech features: The Xpedo GFX has a double-sided, 6061, CNC-machined aluminum body; chromoly spindle; three sealed cartridge bearings; eight removable pins; and an Allen-bolt tension spring. The pedals are available in blue, orange, red, oil slick and black. The GFX uses Xpedo's Latitude Entry System, which enhances engagement with the front claw sprung up off of the axle for easier cleat access. The GFX uses a two-bolt XPT cleat with 6 degrees of float. It is designed for traditional MTB clip shoes and is SPD compatible. With a footprint of 103 x 89 x 33mm, the

pedals weigh 470 grams per pair and sell for \$169 (oil slick, \$199).

Field test results: The Xpedo GFX offers extremely comfortable engagement with its Latitude Entry System. The whole spring body rotates toward your cleat for a more precise entry. We ran our spring tension at five clicks from open and did not experience any unwanted disengagement. We still felt confident with the release not being too firm. With the GFX, you experience a free float with a sharp, distinct release—not a progressive spring-tensioned release. We experienced a few pedal strikes, mainly on the outside of the large platform. They are low profile, so it didn't affect the leading edge of the platform. The GFX is definitely suited for the enduro/downhill more than your basic trail rider. Our Sidi test shoe did not make any contact with the platform or pins. A



softer-soled downhill shoe might have better contact results with the platform. This pedal inspires confidence but is a little heavier than a standard trail pedal. Beginners will feel comfortable with the lower spring tension release, and pros will feel secure with the heavier tensions.

M-Force 8

Tech features: The Xpedo M-Force 8 has a chromoly spindle, double-sided titanium body, three sealed cartridge bearings, and an Allen-bolt tension spring. The pedals come in one color—raw titanium. The body uses Xpedo's PosiLock retention system with spring-loaded adjustability. The M-Force 8 uses a two-bolt XPT cleat with 6 degrees of float. The pedal is SPD single-release compatible and is designed for traditional MTB clip shoes. With a footprint of 54 x 51 x 32mm, the pedals weigh in at 259 grams per pair and sell for \$189.

Field test results: The Xpedo M-Force 8 has a very smooth and free float with a precise disengagement point. Our spring



tensions were set at eight clicks from full open, and we did not experience any unexpected clip releases. The spring tension releases abruptly after the float but provides a confident exit. We experienced no pedal strikes with the minimal surface area. The M-Force 8 is a cross-country racer's dream considering its light weight.

A stiff-soled shoe works well with the minimal contact area. Beginners will struggle a little bit with targeting the entry, but once in, they will feel secure while still having a confident release tension.

Overall comparison: This is a difficult comparison because we are hitting the two extremes of the spectrum. Since we are making the comparison for a trail bike experience, the GFX has a few advantages over the M-Force 8. The platform makes clipping in a little easier and adds protection for the spring. Both pedals offer comfortable ride quality, engagement and release. The weight savings of the M-Force 8 is nice, but in the trail bike world, weight isn't as crucial as in cross-country. That being said, we have to give this one to the Xpedo GFX.