



long
term test

Radical Lights

RAD 3L & PODDA 4L

RRP: \$749 (RAD 3L) \$949 (PODDA 4L)

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WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

The Radical Lights setup comes in a slick padded hard case – it's perfect sized and has pockets for all the components of the systems. The package includes a light weight head unit (120grams including handlebar mount hardware), Lithium Polymer battery (200gm in a nifty soft case with frame mounting straps), helmet mount, smart charger and some spares (fuses, Allen key, mounting loops).

MOUNTING THE LIGHTS

The head units feature a simple, narrow (10mm) bar mount that attaches to the handlebar by a rubber mounting ring. Horizontal adjustment comes by virtue of a hidden Allen key in the light mount, vertical adjustment is by slipping the light around on the bar. The rubber straps can be easily fitted around both oversize and standard bars. While the narrow mounting is easy to fit onto the bars where bar real-estate is limited, this does make the unit shudder when the trail gets bumpy. This wobbling is noticeable in the daylight but the wide-beam means it's not so noticeable on the trail at night.

The helmet mounting hardware is a simple plastic bracket with a Velcro strap. The head unit mounts to the bracket using the same rubber strap system as is used by the bar mount – it's simple to set up and allows easy vertical adjustment. The plastic bracket has slots for the Velcro in both longitudinal and cross positions, a nice little feature for

fitting to helmets without usefully placed vents. Sounds pretty good?

It's not all sweet berms, beer and skittles unfortunately. Mounting the head unit on top of the helmet mount rather than using a specifically designed mount means that the head unit sits a long way above the helmet. While the unit is lightweight, the combination of high mounting and a bit of movement in both the rubber straps and the Velcro, makes for some uncomfortable helmet wobble. Also, sitting up high makes the light vulnerable to low-lying branches – not a great way to end a winter's trail ride. The manufacturers are aware of the problem though and are developing a new, lower profile carbon mount as we speak.

RELEASE THE SECRET WEAPON

Firing the lights up requires three quick clicks on the unit-mounted switch. This is a great precaution for preventing accidents in transit particularly given the heat the lights produce at full power. This switch also rolls through the five output levels and switches the unit from continuous to strobe modes. The 4 LED PODDA 4L offers some 1137 lumens, sufficient power to stun a kangaroo and perhaps even kill smaller wildlife, or at least blind them. The lower power RAD3L uses only three LEDs and puts out 812 lumens. This is obviously less powerful, but unless you're planning to start a business on the side diverting aircraft, it's more than enough. Apart from being SERIOUSLY

bright the beam patterns are brilliant. The medium beam throws an intense and even beam that is wide enough to illuminate the width of a trail at about 3-4 meters. The wide beam pattern gives broad and bright coverage with no hot-spots which is perfect for a bar light. With such a high light output you'd expect the lights to chew the batteries but the lithium polymer batteries last nearly three hours on the highest setting on the PODDA 4L. This is long enough for the average night ride, particularly considering you can extend the run time past 12hrs using lower output levels.

OVERALL

The systems use a relatively simple looking design but clearly pack in some sophisticated electronics and quality components. The mounting hardware, particularly the helmet mount, is not very well designed, a lower and sturdier mount would make a huge difference. However these are early demo models and a new carbon mount is being designed as noted. One of the beauties of this system is the hardware can be returned to the manufacturer for upgrades, updates and overhauls. Overall the Radical lights PODDA 4L and RAD 3L provide great power, a lightweight system, fast recharge (approx. 3hrs) and best of all they're made in Australia! Stay tuned as we put in some solid trial time with these lights.

www.radical-lights.com