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DDwings seat

Norman Peters tries an innovative new seat

I am a heavy rider (over 110kg) and I have always struggled to find a comfortable saddle that does not poke me in the wrong places, especially when I'm tired from riding. My present Velo GelTech saddle is the best part of a decade old and I have been unable to find a more comfortable - no, read less painful - saddle.

The DDWings seat represents a complete re-think of the opposing design issues that a saddle must successfully address to be both functional and comfortable. You need to see the logic of the holistic design in order to visualise and understand its approach to solving the function and comfort design dilemma.

Essentially, the saddle is comprised of two separate seat pads, one for each cheek, with no central peak or horn to poke one in the sensitive nether regions. When viewed from above, the two pads form a double D shape, one stacked above the other, with the curve of the Ds facing the rear of the bike.

Each cheek pad is mounted astride and carried on a cast alloy arrangement that allows the seat to move both forwards and backwards, and tilt up or down as required when fitting the rider to the saddle. The seat pads are both split laterally, with the front third section of each pad hinged on a spring loading so that it can rotate downwards when pressure is applied by your thigh as you pedal on the downwards stroke.

I need a conventional saddle of 143mm width to sit my gluteal muscles. The DDWings seat accommodates this width easily, and when fitted to the bike, presents a comfortable seat, as not just the inside of the gluteus maximus' contact point is supported as with a conventional saddle - rather, the whole of the contact point is supported. This immediately reduces the pressure by spreading the load of the body's mass over a greater area. This is borne out when riding the bike - it was a far more comfortable experience than using my conventional saddle.

The seat is accompanied by detailed instructions on how to set it up properly. This is essential given the unique shape of the device. If you follow the instructions properly, you only need a couple of Allen keys (not supplied) and a small screwdriver.

The movable front part of the seat pads contribute to the comfort and efficiency of pedalling that can be achieved using this saddle: as your power downstroke leg requires it, the front part of the seat rotates downwards, out of the way of your leg, on the power stroke, and then up again as the upwards leg rotation of the pedal-stroke cycle occurs. This means that the seat does not dig in to the under-thigh area as you might expect from this design. It is certainly the most comfortable saddle I have yet ridden on, and I hope to be able to keep it for a while to verify the long-term benefits from using this ingenious design.

There are some downsides to the seat - I haven't weighed it, but it is a bit heavier than a conventional saddle. This is because it offers more area over which to distribute your mass. It is also ridiculously over-engineered, with beautiful alloy castings in evidence.

In summary, it is an ingenious design approach and, if you discard prejudice, as it initially doesn't look right, you will find does the job admirably. I am convinced that it is far more comfortable and at least as good for pedal power as a conventional saddle.

Price: \$121 delivered, seatpost included, 33 diameters available. Order from <http://www.idealinternational.biz>, also see: <http://www.ddwings.com>

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