

Power Grips Strap Set

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I have to be thankful for the winter weather in Northwestern Illinois, particularly for its penchant for quick change. The conditions were not conducive for bike riding when my Power Grips arrived (temps. in the low 30s, high winds, and freezing rain), but in two days time we were “suffering” through sunshine and temperatures in the low 60s.

Power Grips, a product from *Mountain Racing Products*, are advertised as “clipless power without the catch” and “...the simple easy way to increase your pedal power, without the locked-in feel of clipless pedals and straps.” Being a clipless pedal (Time mountain bike pedals) rider for the last 10 years, I was skeptical of their claims. How could any pedal system hope to compare with my Time pedals? But, for the sake of fairness, I decided to give them a chance.

The straps were easy to install on an old pair of pedals. The directions were complete and clear, and the installation, from start to finish, took only 20 minutes. The Power Grip straps are offered in a variety of options. They come in two lengths, the standard straps, and the extra long straps for shoes size 12 or larger. The straps I tested were the standard length. I used a pair of size 11.5 cycling shoes, and the straps had to be adjusted to the very end. I would suggest the extra long straps for anyone wearing anything larger than a size 11. This would allow for more shoe (or boot for winter riding) options. Standard straps are available with *POLICE* on the strap instead of the *Power Grips* logo. Power Grips are also offered in a Sport Pedal Kit and a High Performance Pedal Kit. In both these, the straps come attached to a pair of quality, metal cage pedals.

I expected to spend a lot of my time getting used to the straps, and maybe even taking a fall or two. However, the exit from the pedals is started exactly in the same motion as the exit from my Time pedals. I just twisted my heel to the outside, which loosened the strap, and then pulled my foot straight back. The entry was a little trickier. You have to slide the toe of your shoe into the strap, until the ball of your foot is on the pedal. You then rotate your heel towards the bike, which tightens the strap's grip. You can adjust the tension by rotating your foot in or out. In comparing the entry to other pedal systems, I would have to say the Power Grips are slightly harder to learn than toe clips (cages) and clipless pedal systems, but could be just as fast with practice. They are far more secure than toe clips unless you tighten the straps on the cages, which of course I don't recommend. The Power Straps allow for use of any type of shoes or boots, and no special pedals are required.

When discussing equipment selection in the Police Cyclist course, I used to recommend the mini toe clips (strapless) to riders that did not want, or were not allowed by their department's rules, to use clipless pedals. Now I will be recommending the Power Straps. They are more secure than toe clips, and with practice, just as easy to use. Even if clipless systems were allowed, the Power Grips are certainly cheaper, and allow the use of a much wider variety of footwear options. The Power Straps are \$22.95 with a 10% discount for IPMBA members.

Overall, I was impressed with the product. The straps are well made, and look very durable. They were easy to install with just a phillips screwdriver and an 8mm wrench. They were easier to use than I expected, and are much more secure than toe cages. I did a wide variety of town riding with the Power Straps, including a lot of stop-and-go riding and hills, and never fell or felt my grip on the pedals was not secure.

You can view the entire line of Mountain Racing Products at mrpbike.com.

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