



You come out of the store or restaurant and are greeted with this chilling sight. Do you have your portable mini-compressor with you?

# Now, What?

ONE OF THESE MINI AIR COMPRESSORS COULD HELP GET YOU ROLLING AGAIN. HERE'S HOW THEY RATE.

> By **Jeremy C. Willard**

I live by the mantra that “luck favors the well prepared.” While it’s overkill to bring enough tools to completely disassemble your bike anytime you run to the store for a gallon of milk (you know who you are), packing a selection of “just in case” tools is sound advice. The key is striking a balance based between the odds of something going wrong, how far away from help you will be traveling and the space you have on your bike.

When looking at the odds of something going wrong, I would wager the most common issue faced by riders today is a low or flat tire. A flat tire, even when only a couple of miles from help, means that you are stuck. The difference of a couple of pounds of pressure can have a profound impact on your bike’s handling and overall safety. The odds grow even greater for the ADV rider who goes farther “off the grid,” faces terrain that’s more prone to punctures and is constantly needing to change the tire’s psi based on the surface type.

Lucky for us, there are several choices of compact air

compressors available. But how do you know what’s the best choice for you? To answer that question, I put seven compact compressors through a battery of testing to provide you with the information needed to select the compressor that will work best for you. As a note, to make for an apples to apples comparison, the review focuses on electric compressors. I did this because compact bicycle-style hand pumps do not have the capacity to efficiently inflate the typical street bike tire to the appropriate psi.

Here’s a little more about how the compressors were tested: In addition to collecting the various attributes of each compressor, I also wanted to provide more scientific data on their performance. So, I drilled and tapped a 17” aluminum rear motorcycle wheel and mounted a pressure gauge. I then ran each compressor for three consecutive runs to inflate the 140/70/17 tire to 40 psi, capturing the times at 10 psi increments. An average time was then calculated from the three test runs. The results help to illustrate the strength of each compressor tested. It also worked as a mild

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torture test by doing three consecutive runs. In addition, to test each compressor's ability to set the bead of a tire, I used a 150/70/18 tubeless tire mounted on an aluminum rim. I completely broke the tire's bead and then attempted to reset the bead with each mini compressor. For consistency, all testing used an Acopian power supply to provide a steady 12 volts. The following results are listed in alphabetic order.

## » Cycle Pump ●●●●●

The CyclePump air compressor is made in the United States and sold through BestRest Products at a list price of \$115. The CyclePump is housed in a stout aluminum case with rubberized end caps that give a Sherman tank-like esthetic to its diminutive 2-¼-in. x 4-¼-in. x 5-⅝-in. (H x W x L) size. The beefy unit tipped the scales at 1.78 pounds—the heaviest of the seven models tested. The CyclePump comes with a 19-inch air hose with a robust, brass locking chuck, and connects to power with a 116-¾-inch cord. It also comes with two separate pig-tails—one with an SAE connection and alligator clips for direct battery connection, the other with an SAE connection and a male cigarette lighter-type adapter. The compressor is activated by a sturdy sliding switch. A Velcro strap attached to the compressor secures the cord and hose, and all fit in a simple textile case with Velcro closure. The cord and air hose on the outside of the compressor does make it a little bulkier than some of the other models, with their inboard storage. A major plus for the CyclePump is that it comes with a lifetime warranty, by far the best in the test.

The first thing I noticed when testing the CyclePump was how its solid feel exudes quality. The results showed that the CyclePump backed it up with performance. During our three runs to 40 psi, the CyclePump hummed along effortlessly to the second quickest average time of 4:04.34 minutes, though after the third run, the aluminum casing had become quite warm. The locking chuck made connecting to the Schrader valve of our test wheel a snap. During our bead setting test, I noted that the CyclePump was able to reset the bead of our test wheel very quickly.

Just as you don't see a butcher use Swiss Army Knife, you won't see a lot of extras such as LED light or built-in pressure gauge on the CyclePump. It just flat-out excels as a compressor. The best in class warranty coupled with an impressive build quality and performance justifies the cost and makes



the CyclePump our top choice. [bestrestproducts.com](http://bestrestproducts.com)

## » Double Tough ●●●●

The Double Tough air compressor is sold through Cycle Gear at a list price of \$39.99. The unit measures a compact 2-½-in. x 4-½-in. x 5-⅞-in. and weighs less than a pound (0.83-lb.). The Double Tough has a 12-inch air hose with a screw-type chuck and connects to an electrical source via an SAE connection. It comes with an additional pigtail that has an SAE connection and alligator clips to allow for direct connection to a battery. The compressor has a built-in, non-illuminated 0-80 psi pressure gauge and a recessed cavity in its plastic housing to allow for the power cord and air hose to be tucked away. The compressor is activated by a push-button switch that has a cheap feel. Made in China, the Double Tough comes in a nice textile carrying case with zippered closure. The packaging contained no implied warranty.



During testing, the shorter air hose—the second shortest of the compressors tested—made connecting the compressor to the wheel's Schrader valve a little difficult. I also noted that the plastic-threaded connection used on the air hose seemed flimsy and a potential weak spot. During the three timed runs to 40 psi, the Double Tough labored much harder than the other compressors tested and its average time of 7:04.69 minutes to fill the tire to 40 psi was the slowest in this group. During the bead setting test, the compressor again labored, but was able to set the bead on the test tire.

I liked the look and price of the Double Tough, but its laboring and slow test results left me feeling that some of the other compressors tested are a better choice. [cyclegear.com](http://cyclegear.com)

## » MotoPressor ●●●●

The MotoPressor's package states that it is designed in Australia, and I deemed this the "Mad Max" air compressor. Just one look at its naked, steampunk design shows how it earned this nickname. Its unique shape makes the MotoPressor a little tricky to measure, but I recorded a size of 1-⅝-in. x



3-1/2-in. x 4-7/8-in. and a weight of 1.3 pounds. The unit has a 25-inch air hose with a screw-on chuck. It also has a 84.5-inch power cord with an SAE connection. It is packaged with a battery lead with SAE connection, and has a separate pigtail with an SAE connection and alligator clips for direct battery connection. The compressor is activated via a small rocker switch with a nice feel. The MotoPressor stores in a neoprene bag with a Velcro enclosure. The MotoPressor can be purchased in the U.S. through AltRider.com at a list price of \$49.95. The compressor is made in China and comes with a 5-year warranty.

Like the apocalyptic hot rods from Mad Max, the MotoPressor loudly ripped its way to the fastest average time to 40 psi, needing only 3:41.75 minutes, on average. During testing, however, a real negative brought by the lack of casing quickly became apparent. After the first run, the MotoPressor was hot, and by the time the third run had concluded I abandoned the idea of picking it up. I also noted that the minimalist packaging means that the gears that link the electric motor to the compressor are exposed. This has the potential of allowing access for dirt and debris to cause problems. Oddly, when it came time for the bead setting test, I had to coax the tire a bit to get the bead to set. Based on the quick performance in the timed test, I expected setting the bead to be easier.

The MotoPressor's performance is notable. However, the unit's packaging is a real detractor, one that presents a tradeoff not fully offset by its smaller size.

### » MotoPumps Airshot ●●●●●

The MotoPumps Airshot can be purchased directly from MotoPumps for the list price of \$59.95. The blow dryer-shaped compressor measures 1-1/2-in. x 3-5/8-in. x 4-1/2-in., has a 24-inch coiled air hose and 80-1/2-inch power cord with SAE connections at each end. At 0.71 pounds, it is the smallest and lightest tested. The unit is activated by push of a button. Both the air hose and power cord are detachable, for better stowage—the only such compressor in the group. The Airshot also has a small LED light that comes on as soon as the compressor is plugged into a power source, which is a handy touch.

There's a pigtail with SAE and alligator clips for direct battery connection, a pigtail with SAE and a male cigarette lighter connection and a fused SAE-to-battery connection. The package includes a pencil-type pressure gauge. All of this is smartly designed to fit into a very nice textile case with a netted top pocket and zipper closure. The

Airshot is made in China and comes with a 5-year warranty.

When testing the Airshot, I noted that the knurled brass screw type chuck on the air hose eased connection to the test wheel's Schrader valve. The coiled hose, however, coupled with the unit's light weight, meant that the Airshot was left to spring about more than I would like. The inflation test validated the saying that there is no replacement for displacement—the diminutive Airshot had the second-slowest time: 6:38.63 minutes. Interestingly, the Airshot's quickest run to 40 psi was its last, meaning it was actually getting better as the test progressed; the other compressors' times either stayed consistent or increased in subsequent tests. Expectations were low for the tiny Airshot in the bead-setting test, but I was pleasantly surprised that it was able to set the bead on our test tire with little fuss.

The MotoPumps Airshot is a smartly packaged piece of kit that is available at reasonable price. For those who are tight on space, this may be the compressor for you.

[motpumps.com](http://motpumps.com)

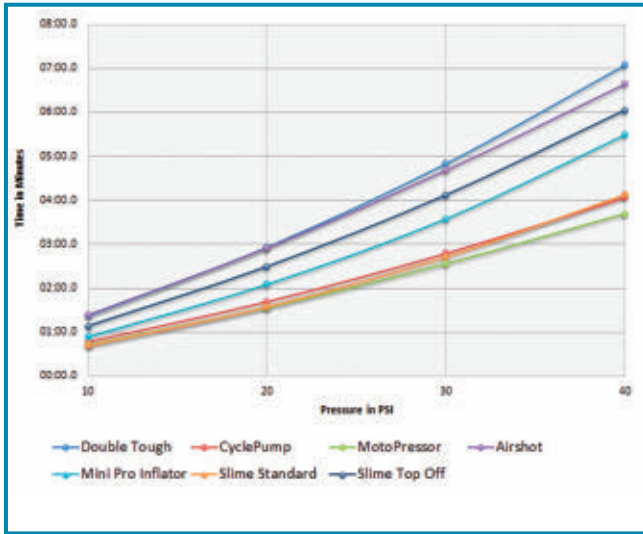
### » MotoPumps Mini Pro ●●●●●

Another MotoPumps offering, the Mini Pro is neatly packaged and compact at 2-in. x 4-3/4-in. x 5-7/8-in. The unit has a 79-1/4-inch power cord with SAE connector, and a 43-inch coiled air hose with a lovely knurled brass screw on chuck. Both the air hose and the power cord neatly stow inboard the compressor's plastic housing. The compressor is activated via rocker switch. The Mini Pro also has a built-in, illuminated, 0-50-psi pressure gauge and an LED light housed in the same recessed area where the coiled air hose is stored—a nice touch. The Mini Pro is available in two different packages: the "standard" which lists for \$69.95 and comes with an additional pigtail with a mail cigarette-style plug; and the "deluxe" which retails for \$79.95 and adds a neoprene carrying case as well as alligator clips for direct battery connection and a fused SAE-to-battery connection. The Mini Pro Inflator is made in China and comes with a 5-year warranty.

When testing the Mini Pro, I was impressed by its well thought-out packaging. When conducting the inflation test, the compressor filled the test tire with a low-frequency hum that never wavered as the pressure climbed. Vibration was minimal. During our inflation test, the compressor scored a solid mid-pack average of 5:29.54 minutes. While its stable-mate's coiled air hose created some difficulty with connec-







psi, the Slime Standard averaged 4:08.4 minutes, placing it just behind the CyclePump to claim third place. It also aced the bead-setting test. However, the Slime Standard was the bulkiest compressor tested.

With big power and low price, the Slime Standard is worth a look, although with cigarette lighter-only power, some sort of female cigarette lighter receptacle adapter would need to be purchased. While the price is tempting, I'd spend the extra money for a compressor geared more toward motorcyclists.

[slime.com](http://slime.com)

### » Slime Top Off ●●

Like its bigger brother, the Slime Top Off is available at big box stores for an almost too good to be true price of \$9.88, making it the cheapest of all compressors tested. The Top Off measures 2-in. x 3-3/4-in. x 4-1/4-in. and weighs 0.74 pounds—second lightest. The Top Off has a laughably short air hose—just 4-1/4 inches—with a screw-type chuck, but does have more than 10-feet of power cord (121-1/4 inches). Much like its auto-focused sibling, the Top Off comes only with a male cigarette connector. The compressor is turned on by a very small push button. It also has an LED light and a non-illuminated 0-50 psi pressure gauge. A very flimsy clear plastic carrying case with a zippered closure comes with the compressor. The Top Off is made in China and comes with a 1-year warranty.

When testing the Slime Top Off, I first noted that the LED light was on the opposite side of the short air hose, making it useless in practical applications.

The short air hose made connecting to and filling the test wheel difficult. It also means that the compressor just kind of hangs by the Schrader valve when filling. Finally, because there is less hose to dissipate heat, after the third run, the heat had traveled into the chuck making it impossible to remove without gloves. The Top Off was able to fill the test tire to 40 psi, with an average time of 6:03.27 minutes. While able to reseal the bead of our test tire, it required a lot of coaxing, which was further complicated by the short air hose.

If you don't have a mini compressor and want to spend little, the Slim Top Off unit is better than nothing. It is compact, has a pressure gauge and pumped air into a tire. But when compared to the motorcycle-focused compressors in this test, the Top Off's shortcomings emerged. As the saying goes, spend a little more and only cry once.

[slime.com](http://slime.com) MCN



tion and operation, the Mini Pro's longer coiled hose worked seamlessly. The Mini Pro also set the bead in our test tire with relative ease.

Its performance, combined with the smartly integrated LED light and illuminated pressure gauge, make it quite user-friendly. The air hose and power cord are neatly stored away within the compressor itself, making it so easy to pack that I would suggest buying the standard version, as the carrying case really isn't needed. One final note: During the time I had all of the compressors at my house for testing, I went on a 500-plus mile ride. The MotoPump Mini Pro was the compressor I grabbed on the way out the door.

[motonumps.com](http://motonumps.com)

### » Slime Standard ●●●

The Slime Standard Tire Inflator is available at your local big box stores for \$14.88, making it a real bargain. This was the largest compressor in the test, at 3-1/4-in. x 6-in. x 7-in. and second heaviest at 1.71 pounds. It has a 25-3/4-inch air hose with a screw-type chuck. It also has a 120-inch power cord with only a male cigarette lighter connection.

The compressor has a plastic casing with a cutout at the top that forms a handle, a recessed area to stow the air hose and power cord, a light that comes on when powered, and a non-illuminated, 0-100 psi pressure gauge. The compressor is turned on by a push-button switch, and its three LED lights were handy. The Slime Standard Tire Inflator is made in China and comes with a 1-year warranty.

While the unit labored during its second and third inflation runs to 40



JEREMY C. WILLARD