

Comparing Motorcycle Riding Gear

by Robyn Smith

The textiles vs leathers debate is all about tradeoffs. Choosing which material to use to cover your hide with and spend your pennies on depends on how much you value individual tradeoffs and ultimately, your intended use and riding conditions. Sounds easy enough, but deciding between textiles vs leathers has had great rider minds in a muddle and increasingly so over the last couple of years as the quality and versatility of both materials has improved so much! Just type in "textiles vs leathers " into Google and you will find that 90% of the results are from forums with the answer ultimately resulting in the fact that it depends on your personal preferences. The problem is that this does not help those new to the biking world who have not had the time or experience to develop their own, well-guided preferences...and so the argument goes on.

But, it's really quite simple if you use the **BMI (Best Motorcycle Information) textiles vs leathers test.** This test takes the four most differentiating attributes of the two materials into consideration - price, maintenance, comfort and protection. Each attribute is also assigned to either leathers or textiles, depending on which material has the greater advantage in terms of the attribute. After reading the brief summary on each, assign a score out of a hundred to each attribute, giving those attributes that are most important to you higher scores, so that in the end the total score of your four attributes adds to 100. Then add up the score that you gave to the leather attributes and textile attributes, and the material with the highest score is your answer - and best of all it will be unique to your personal preferences.

Price – Textiles

Motorcycle textiles are cheaper to buy than leathers. It is also much harder to judge the quality of leathers and so you take the risk of paying a lot of money for a suit that does not have quality stitching and construction. (Just beware however that it is widely accepted that your textile suit will probably only survive one crash before you have to fork out for a new pair.)

Maintenance – Textiles

This one is simple - motorcycle textiles can be thrown in a commercial washer, while leathers will need to be sent to the cleaners.

Comfort – Textiles

Motorcycle textiles have an all weather capability: vents for when it is warm, liners for when it is cold and water resistance for rain. It breathes more easily than leather, and water slides off it like a duck's back.

Leather is also much heavier than textile.

Protection – Leather

Tests are conducted all the time to compare the abrasion resistance of motorcycle riding gear materials and leather always comes out on top as the most durable material. Furthermore, leather does not melt from friction, it will cushion your fall more than motorcycle textiles would and it offers the best protection against a road rash. The fact that leather also lasts through multiple crashes whilst textiles will probably only last through one, says a lot about the difference in protection and impact between the two materials.

The textiles vs leathers debate basically comes down to protection vs everything else. It must be said however, that even though leathers offer more protection, all motorcycle textiles have to abide by EU standards and so it's not like they don't offer you protection at all. Motorcycle leathers just offers better protection - that's all.

If you are a commuter, then motorcycle textiles are probably the best bet. They are more comfortable and have more pockets for storage. Motorcycle leathers are designed for performance riding so you are not able to wear many layers underneath, and if its hot, you're going to arrive sweating - not good for your next promotion or that honey that you are trying to impress!

If you are into extreme riding, then it is unquestionable that leathers are what you need!

My personal opinion when it comes to textiles vs leathers is that skin takes a lot longer to heal than discomfort - but then again I don't commute to work every day, I am no longer on a budget and I have seen enough to put my safety first - always!