

Motoport Air Mesh Kevlar Overpants



review by Moshe Levy

RIGHT ABOUT NOW, many MCN readers are getting their first sweaty taste of summer, and many are wondering how to achieve ATGATT protection with the comfort and ventilation provided by lightweight textile-based mesh gear. Although a plethora of choices exist for mesh jackets, a rider's choices for top-shelf mesh overpants are slim, indeed. After a decade and over 120,000 miles wearing mid-priced overpants from Firstgear and Olympia, I ordered a set of Air Mesh Kevlar overpants from Motoport, to see if its gear lives up to its reputation—and its price! Be forewarned—although the basic Air Mesh Kevlar overpants start at \$349, a dizzying array of options exist, including suspenders, alternate pockets, a cash belt, various colors, armor upgrades, and more. It is truly a built-to-order product, based on each rider's measurements, and the base price can quickly double if the pants are loaded with optional extras! Speaking of which, since protection was my priority, I ordered every safety-related option available: The Quad-Armor upgrade (\$129), perforated closed-cell EVA foam hip pads (\$49), sacrum Quad-Armor (\$75), and standard silver reflective striping on lower legs (\$12). Total: \$614 + S&H.

The exterior styling is strictly business. My basic black model's two cargo pockets (one on each leg) allow for some modest storage room, while velcro flaps at side-pocket level allow requisite access to your pant pockets. The silver reflective piping on the lower pant legs, *a la* Aerostich, was predictably visible at night when hit with headlight beams. Motoport's Kevlar blend mesh is quite thick, and surprisingly rough to the touch, not unlike a fabric version of pumice stone. Motoport claims a tear strength of 1260 lbs. and an abrasion strength of 1800 cycles before failure. To put this into perspective, competition-grade leather's tear strength is 110-120 lbs., and its abrasion strength is usually in the 1700 cycle range. The material is then safety-stitched to provide 2000 lbs. of seam strength. Beefy YKK zippers run up the inside of each leg and rubber coated snaps keep things locked together.

Unlike many less expensive overpants, there is no polyurethane in the mesh, and so there is no danger of hot plastic melting into your skin in the event of a slide. Some riders may therefore feel less anxious about wearing shorts under the Air Mesh Kevlar overpants than under lesser garments.



Unzipping the pant legs reveals nearly complete armor coverage as shown at top right. Starting at the hip, two half-moon shaped hip pads are installed in integrated pockets. The thigh area features a 12" x 7" Quad-Armor pad which wraps around the front upper leg, and the shin is protected by 15" x 7" Quad-Armor pad. Both of these pads are held in place via sewn-in pockets, accessible via velcro on the top side for removal when washing. "Quad-Armor" is essentially Motoport's standard Tri-Armor, but with the addition of a layer of Dow Corning's APS (Active Protection System) silicone-laminated woven fabric. The company claims its EN-Certified Quad-Armor is "the best impact protection in the world." Though we have luckily not tested that claim, the coverage provided is certainly second to none. However, these pants definitely require a break-in period, but once broken in, their feel is quite comfortable.

I chose the optional sacrum armor pad, but no matter how I trimmed it, once seated on my bikes, I wound up sitting on it. This issue was a function of its locating pocket, which was sewn-in and non-adjustable. I wound up removing the pad entirely, and suggest an in-person fitting if the sacrum pad is important to you.

On the road, stepping into and out of the overpants is straightforward, even with boots on. No acrobatics required. And the hydrophilic nylon mesh inner lining proved comfortable and effective at allowing ven-



Above: Inside of right leg reveals copious armor coverage, while the closed left leg shows the 3M reflective stripe for added conspicuity at night.

tilation, while the integrated elastic kidney support was welcome on longer rides.

I found the realistic temperature range of the Air Mesh Kevlar overpants was approximately 55°–100°F. Above 100°F, my old Firstgear mesh overpants provided significantly more air flow, though at a price in crash protection (no hip, thigh or shin protection, and only a fraction of the knee protection.) If temps where you ride rarely exceed +100°F, the Motoports can serve as the only 3-season overpant in your collection. And it should be noted that Motoport offers an optional Aero-Tex liner for waterproof and cold weather riding, perhaps expanding the Air Mesh envelope to a true four-season overpant.

After an adventure-filled three seasons of heavy commuting use, I have two gripes. First, the interior of the cargo pockets is the same rough Kevlar mesh as the exterior of the garment. Delicate items, like exposed touch-sensitive cell phone screens, deserve a softer lining. Second, the sacrum armor pocket should be attached via velcro instead of sewn-in, to allow repositioning.

Ultimately, I can wholeheartedly recommend the Motoport Air Mesh overpants. They have proven to wear like iron, and I would not be surprised if these are the last three-season overpants I'll ever need to buy given the truly robust construction and generous warranty. These are first-class American-made gear for the motorcyclist who wants the best quality on the market.

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