

Sprinter Stick DISTRIBUTOR: www.thestick.nz; RRP: \$60

While this may look like some sort of circus apparatus, give it a go before you cast your judgement...because this handy massaging stick has earned its way into my travel kit.

Here's how...like most of us, I have an old calf injury that usually takes about 30-minutes to warm up both cycling and running. Every ride, I promise myself that I will book in those massage sessions and get onto the foam roller to really sort this calf out; then the next ride rolls around and I am moaning about my calf again.

I have various foam rollers stacked up behind the door, but for some reason, this practice has not become embedded into my

routine. Then I tried the Sprinter Stick and discovered the size of the apparatus makes for easy massaging from a seated position on your calves, quads and hamstrings. You can control the pressure yourself for a light or hard massage and the size of this stick makes for easy portability as it fits into your gym bag.

I have found myself bringing out the Sprinter Stick routinely before my rides and runs, for a quick rub down before I head out. You can even multitask - and catch up on the previous night's World Champs results while warming up for your own ride.

PHILIPPA FRIARY



Shimano RS81 C24 Clincher wheelset DISTRIBUTOR: [Sheppard Industries](http://SheppardIndustries.com); RRP: \$899

The RS81 C24 sits somewhere between Shimano's entry level and mid-range Ultegra wheelsets but there is a bit more to them than first meets the eye.

This clincher wheelset, reviewed with Kenda Kountach Endurance 700 x 23c tyres, is a clever blend of alloy clincher rim with a carbon laminate layer to save weight and add stiffness. The braking surface is still alloy which allows better heat transfer and more consistent braking than a carbon rim. The rim width is 20.8mm and the depth 24mm, so the wheels we tested were more skewed to lighter weight than an aero effect but they do also come as a 50mm rim depth wheelset for added aero benefit.

The claimed weight is 1,502 grams without skewers but we found the actual weight to be closer to 1,545 grams which is still not bad for a wheelset of this level.

20 rear and 16 front stainless steel butted and bladed straight pull spokes enable a higher tension, less spoke twist and help transfer the power to the road and are a step up from J type spokes that come standard on some entry level wheelsets. The hubs have an

aluminium body shell and steel ball bearings. The freewheel body is steel 10 or 11-speed Shimano/SRAM compatible. Nothing flash here, but serviceable and dependable.

They ride well holding their speed on the flat, feel smooth and do a reasonable job soaking up the vibration from our chip roads thanks to the carbon. All though hard to quantify, the lighter weight must also help when you hit the hills.

We see the RS81 C24 as a solid but light wheel which could stay on your bike all year offering good all-round performance and excellent reliability. If you are lucky enough to have a lightweight carbon aero wheelset for race day then that's the only time you would take them off.

Sure you will find wheels that are faster, lighter, and stiffer or have a better aero effect that will outperform the RS81s, but of course they come at a higher price. The RS81s are a genuine step up from entry level wheelsets, providing the long and reliable service that Shimano is famous for, at a reasonable price.

BRENT GILLIES

