

Pedalite 360 Degree Visibility Pedal Lights

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A Commuters Best Friend?

-by Scott Ender

Seldom do you encounter products designed and manufactured with the commuter cyclists in mind and then it is usually only messenger bags and clothing that receive the bulk of the attentions. Then along comes a company named Pedalite International with a product specifically designed with the commuting cyclist in mind.



Very Clever Pedalites

Pedalite International is a UK based company that designs, manufactures and distributes environmentally friendly safety products worldwide. The company's best selling products include the unique 360 degree visibility battery-free [pedalite](#) for cyclists, that harvest kinetic energy which it then stores to efficiently re-use in order to keep the safety lights on even when pedaling has stopped.

In fact, the pedals are one of many product offerings that they offer, including a solar powered baglite, solar powered anklelites and an environmentally friendly/biodegradable "green oil" manufactured from plant extracts.

USCR was able to obtain a set of these pedals for review and what follows is the initial reaction to the product.

The Pedalite 360 Degree Visibility Pedals are a new product in the marketplace that feature a rear red, middle yellow and front white LED light in each pedal. The lights are powered by a generator within the pedal body itself. Once you've been riding

awhile, the lights will continue to run due to the fact that they are able to store a charge through stopping. When I received the Pedalites, I was pretty excited. I thought that the product sounded like a cool concept and really like the fact that the pedal stroke generated the energy necessary to run the lights rather than having an external battery system. So, tonight when I got home from work, I swapped the Shimano SPD pedals that I normally keep on my single speed for the Pedalite Pedals to do an evening ride.

Even prior to the ride, the first thought that occurred to me was that it seemed to be odd that a pedal marketed as a commuter pedal was sold as a flat pedal since most of the people that I know (present company included) tend to ride a SPD style pedal or a pedal that has a cleat. The next thing that I thought was unusual and a bit disappointing was that the compatible Pedalite toeclip essential to make the pedal function better as a commuter was sold separately. Also, I was surprised by the bulk of the pedal itself and the fact that rather than using a 15 mm wrench opening, they chose to use what seems to be a less than standard 14 mm sizing.

Once on the bike, I actually found the broad platform of the pedal to be a comfortable base to ride on. When I'm out on a casual ride, I am typically sporting a pair of flip flops and can vouch that most flat pedals (or my SPD cleats when I'm too lazy to switch pedals) tend to feel like they are about to burrow into my arch after about 15 minutes. On the Pedalite, given the broad base, the pedal had a comfortable feel well into the ride. In Pedalite's marketing, they state that the visibility of the pedal is up to a kilometer. I have a bit of a hard time buying that, but can state that the pedal provided a good amount of visibility. I liked the fact that the pedal cast light to front, back and sides.

After about 30 minutes of cruising, I arrived safe and sound and felt that I was better visible due to the Pedalites. I was pleased with the overall performance of the pedal but to reinforce what I think that they could improve, it would be great if the manufacturer could figure a way to drop some of the weight off the pedal and/or figure out a way to make a pedal with the visibility characteristics of the Pedalite with a SPD design. I do like the fact that they are trying to be environmentally green and friendly, love the innovation of putting lights on the pedal and think that anything that can be done to increase rider visibility is definitely a good thing. All in all, the Pedalite pedals functioned as I expected them to in terms of performance and visibility.

USCR will be doing some follow up testing on not only the Pedalite pedals but also on the green oil and their additional lighting products. Pedalite is very concerned about the lack of visibility of the cyclist when out commuting or pleasure riding amongst the all mighty automobile. Changes in lighting can make cyclists difficult to see for automobile drivers and it is Pedalite's hope that by encouraging proper lighting in both the daytime and the evening hours, that fewer cyclists will end up on the wrong end of the meeting.

Most lighting systems are designed for the front and rear of the bike, with generally only plastic reflectors placed within the spokes of the wheels for side viewing. In studies performed, most of the accidents occurring were side impact collisions. These

pedals with their flashing lights, increase the distance of visibility of the cyclist without relying on the car's headlights to pick up the reflectors. Even better, as noted above, the lights will keep on flashing even when at a standstill. Just as many of today's automobiles have "Daylight Running Lights", perhaps it isn't such a far-fetched assumption to have them on bicycles too.