

Aerostich Merino Riding “under” Shorts and Cotton Riding Shorts

What to wear under there!

By Ron Davis #111820

FOR THOSE COMMITTED TO WEAR-ing protective riding pants or suits through the summer, staying comfortable can really pose some challenges, particularly if you’re in the saddle all day, particularly if you’re an older rider. The shrinking gluteous maximus and expanding waistline that unfortunately often come with the territory of advancing age put increasing pressure on our “swimming suit areas,” and, young or old, heat and perspiration down there constitute the formula for a great case of the dreaded “monkey butt.” Aerostich’s solution to these issues is a selection of shorts specifically made for riders of the ATGATT persuasion.

The first, Merino Riding Shorts, are not made by Aerostich (though they are American-made), but are described in their catalogue as their best solution for extended riding, hot or cold. Merino wool has a reputation for wicking moisture away from the body more effectively than synthetics, acting as kind of a personal dehumidifier for your nether parts. The eight panels of this material come together as form-fitting, stretchy bike shorts very similar to those worn by tri-athletes, and they feature thick padding in the crotch. Once I slipped these on, I instantly liked the feel of them—nice support with a luxurious layer of inch thick padding that could make a hard stock seat softer—but my wife laughed. With a build that will never be described as “ripped,” but possibly

as “rippled,” I’d feel a little self-conscious trotting around in these at a convenience store or a campground.



Merino: Aerostich claims their Merino Riding Shorts are their best solution for fighting heat and providing comfort under protective gear.

I wore the Merino Riding Shorts under Aerostich Darien pants on a mid-July jaunt to “The High Ground” near Neillsville, Wisconsin, a familiar waypoint for motorcyclists I’d recommend to anyone venturing through northern Wisconsin. The High Ground (thehighground.org) features spectacular vistas from a towering glacial moraine, poignant tributes to veterans of

foreign wars, and authentic Native American effigy mounds. On the way there, the generous padding of the shorts gave me some real relief from “dead butt syndrome”

and despite their snug fit, the shorts did not get clammy as the temperature rose into the 80’s. With my wife’s reaction in mind, I was reluctant to treat the other visitors to The High Ground to the image of me in skin tight shorts, so I left my riding pants on for a quick sandwich and walking tour of the displays and remained comfortable. Merino Riding Shorts are only offered in black and are available in three sizes (M, L, and XL).

On the way home, I tried another Aerostich solution, their Mid-Weight Cotton Riding shorts. I had already worn these shorts around home a little, and each cycle through the washing machine had made the shorts softer and softer. Like other Aerostich-produced gear I’ve worn, these 100 percent cotton twill shorts are well made from quality materials; I’m betting they will last a long time. Concurring with my wife’s appraisal though, these shorts are not exactly a fashion statement. They’re baggy and are held up by an elastic waist band and a sewn-in strap belt cinched by a polycarbonate buckle. The shorts lack back pockets, but have smallish ones in front. However, they are quite comfy, breathe well, and are easily good-looking enough to wear hiking or around the campground. Aerostich recommends wearing them commando style for maximum breathability, and I haven’t tried that, though I could see wearing the Merino shorts under them. The cotton riding shorts can be ordered in

two different inseam lengths, 9" and 6", five different colors, and four sizes (M, L, XL, XXL, and XXXL).

As I've implied, you're not going to see anyone wearing these shorts on the pages of *GQ*, *Maxim*, or *DETAILS*, but keep in mind they're purposed riding wear, designed to cope with the heat under protective gear and hours in the saddle. Because of this function-driven design, neither is cheap. The Merino Riding Shorts from Aerostich run \$107, while the Mid-Weight Cotton Shorts cost \$57, but considering specialty clothing like this may allow riders to wear their much more expensive protective gear in comfort for more miles, I suspect many will agree these solutions are worth the cost.

For more information, visit Aerostich.com or call their friendly CSR's in Duluth at

800.222.1994.

Aerostich Merino Riding Shorts and Mid-Weight Cotton Shorts

Pros:

Solid solutions for staying comfortable under protective gear, top quality construction

Cons:

No one's going to be mistaking you for a fashionista, a little expensive ☹

Cotton: Aerostich Mid-Weight Cotton Shorts are designed to provide breathability and comfort for riders wearing protective riding pants or suits.



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