



Shimano Click'R pedals PD-T400

Sturdy pedals with chunky appearance that belie a feather-light grip - ideal for first-time clip-less users

Pedals fall into two main categories: flat (usually with toe-clips) and 'clip-less' or 'clip-in' (where a mechanism in the pedal grips to a cleat on the sole of your shoe). The T400 pedals from Shimano (or, to use the full name, the PD-T400 Click'R) are the clip-less variety, but the gripping mechanism is incredibly light, so it's very easy to release your shoes from the pedals. They're a useful option for cyclists keen to try clip-less pedals for the first time.

It has to be said, these pedals are pretty chunky. The central part (the bit that grips the cleat in your shoe) is similar to Shimano's double-sided mountain-bike pedals such as the M520 or M540, but this is surrounded by a large plastic platform so the whole pedal measures about 10cm from end to end and over 7cm side to side.

But once you stop looking at the sheer size of the pedals, and get riding, then it's a revelation.

Having fitted the pedals to my bike, I clipped in my shoes (already fitted with Shimano 2-bolt cleats – more on that later) in the usual way, and they seemed to be nicely held in place. There was no difference in grip to the other Shimano pedals I use on my hack bike and winter/cross bike. However, with just the slightest outward swing of the ankle my shoe was unclipped.

Suspicious, I carried on for a few miles, reached a steep hill and deliberately stood up in a big gear, lunging out of the saddle, pulling up on the pedals as hard as I could, to see if I could force them to unclip.

Not a chance.

But then reaching the top of the hill, I sat down in the saddle, and with that slight outward swing of the ankles - both sides this time - my shoes were released once again.

Easy as pie.

For cyclists already comfortable with clip-less pedals (Shimano or any other brand) there's no need to use these T400s. However, for anyone keen to try clip-less pedals for the first time, but worried about being unable to unclip at a junction or emergency stop, the quick and featherlight release mechanism on the T400s makes them highly recommended.

The T400s are also easier to clip into than 'normal' Shimano pedals, as a separate spring between the main bit of the pedal and the plastic surround ensures the front of the gripping mechanism always stands proud, so your cleat can be very easily engaged. There's no need to turn the pedal over with your toe or look down to see what's happening.

Some aficionados might think the T400s look pretty ugly, but these pedals will be fine on winter bikes, tourers, hybrids and commuter bikes (commuters will also appreciate the inbuilt reflectors). If you're worried about style, you can use the T400s as an interim step, and upgrade to something sleeker once you're confident about the unclipping technique. And if you like the style, you can upgrade to the T700s, which are identical in appearance to the T400s but 60g lighter for the pair.

The T400 and T700 pedals come with a set of cleats to fit to your shoe. These are the SM-SH56 'multi-directional' variety, which allow you to release your shoe by swinging the heel horizontally outwards, or diagonally upwards, or anywhere in between. The T400 pedals can also be used with SM-SH51 cleats, which allow you to release your shoe by swinging the heel horizontally outwards only. Other types of Shimano cleat are not suitable.

Our test models had the black plastic surround; white versions of the T400 and T700 are also available.

As with most other Shimano pedals of this type, the gripping tension can be adjusted from 'strong' to 'weak' – or in the case of these pedals from 'very light' to 'even lighter'.

The pedals have a small amount of 'float' (the ability to move your feet from side to side slightly without releasing the cleat). The manual that comes with the pedals doesn't say how much this is, but I'd guess it's a couple of degrees. Of course, if you do reach the outer edge of the float, then your shoe will unclip more easily than with a standard pedal.

When it comes to cost, the recommended retail price for a pair of Shimano T400 Click'R pedals is a penny under £40, but you can find them for nearer £35 at some local bike shops and on-line stores. The lighter T700 is about twenty quid more.

Verdict

Sturdy pedals with chunky appearance that belie a feather-light grip - ideal for first-time clip-less users.