

# GEARING UP: Leather or Textile?

Written by John Briscoe of Gear Up Motorcycle Accessories



This question is much like the investment question – which is the best investment medium?

There is no absolute right or wrong answer – it depends! Well depends on what? In both cases ironically on your propensity for risk and comfort! The more secure and stable portfolios don't necessarily give you the extensive returns but do give a level of peace of mind. On the other hand the riskier share market will give you potentially really attractive returns over the long term!

The same applies to the textile / leather debate. Leather is without doubt the safer material and will definitely give you better levels of protection – it is tough and well proven. One just has to look to the Motor GP guys to see them all wearing leather. In colder climates it is definitely warmer and can be more protective in a light rain shower.

The downside of leather is that the material is relatively heavy in weight and warm. In fact bordering on hot when worn in sunny South Africa. It is also expensive when compared to the textile option. Leather can cost twice as

much as the alternative but more recently we've seen the price being about a third more. Cleaning a leather jacket also takes a bit more effort (having to use a leather cleaner first and then applying a leather feed) but the reward is a soft, good-looking jacket! The final hurdle is that the choice in terms of sizing in the leather market is restricted to the regular sized person – unless of course you have the item made up by one of the local leather specialists.

The major advantage of textile protective clothing is that it is significantly lighter and more comfortable to wear. The material is easier to work with and hence the style, colours and most importantly the 'fit' can be 'tailored'. This results in the garment being worn more often than the 'clumsier' leather alternative. The items are easier to clean (washing machine), dry a lot quicker (after rain storms), pack easier (into the top box when shopping), and significantly cooler in hot conditions. The latest designs in textile jackets offer amazing summer, winter, and wind/rain options! Let alone colour options such as the hugely visible neon yellow colour!

The disadvantage of textile is that whilst it does offer one protection in an accident it is not at the same level of the tougher leather option especially at significantly high speeds. If not fitted correctly it can also be the source of annoying 'flapping' at high speeds.

In conclusion then wear the garment that suits your risk profile and comfort requirements. The worst choice would be not to wear any protective clothing at all! And yes there are some really 'cheap' items that use inferior quality materials – rather spend a tad more and get the most appropriate kit! The staff at Gear Up will no doubt try and assess your circumstances and try and give you the best advice arising out of the feedback from our customers and personal experiences. Remember ATGAT – All The Gear All The Time!

