

Pedalite

The Pedalite is a pedal with built-in flashing LED lights, powered by a small built-in dynamo system geared to the pedal axle. The dynamo's resistance can be clearly felt if you turn the axle by hand, but again it seemed undetectable on the bike.

This is a substantial platform-type pedal – no clipless version is available, though the manufacturers are looking into it. Made in good quality plastic, each pedal has a solid feel, and the metal studs for extra grip are excellent. Weight is 570 g per pair. There's a distinct bulge on the bottom of the pedal, which you can still pedal on, but grip is much better right way up. The optional matching toe clips make it easier to get it right without looking down – but they were a bit short for my size 12 (47) feet. 'Normal' longer toe-clips will fit, too.

When you start to pedal, the pedal flashes with no fewer than three LEDs: a white one aimed forwards, amber out to the side and a red one at the back. Combined with the motion of the pedals, the

result is a fairly eye-catching show of lights. On an unlit road it's bright enough to illuminate the road surface below you too, and the flashes are uncomfortably bright if you look straight into the LEDs. Unfortunately, it's also extremely hard to photograph well: this 'cloud' of front flashes was the best we could do.

I'm not too sure how conspicuous the quite small lights really are so low down. But as well as the actual illumination, I think much of the effectiveness of the Pedalite lies in the 'What is that?' novelty effect. As any recumbent rider will tell you, anything unusual gets noticed and given extra road space, and moving, multicoloured flashing pedals probably qualify in a way that normal flashing LED lights don't.

The Pedalite keeps on flashing for a few minutes when you stop, and the pedal also has built-in reflectors front and rear (which won't fall off, like many seem to!).

There are other cheaper 'no name' flashing pedals



The optional toe clip and built in studs give you good foot grip on the Pedalite

around, and a look on eBay found a selection for under a tenner. Build quality issues aside, none have the Pedalite's white-amber-red system, using all-amber LEDs instead, and more significantly they lack the standlight and the metal grip studs. Even at £34.99 per pair, plus £6.99 for toe clips, I'd say the Pedalite is better value.

The Pedalite is available direct from the manufacturers: Tel 020 8547 4020 or see www.pedalite.com They have a number of dealers and international distributors: contact them or see the website for details.

Reality check

All three ideas are great and well implemented. And apart from the not insignificant cost, a bit of weight and some miniscule extra drag there's not really a downside. But after fitting all of these bits and pieces I couldn't help thinking that in most situations you're made just as visible, if not more so, by simply wearing a road-worker type high-viz reflective jacket.

It also crossed my mind that in almost two decades of mostly urban cycling, much of it at night, I've never yet 'not been seen' in a way these devices would prevent: caution, road awareness, skill and positioning are better safety aids than any light. If you already have a decent set of reliable lights on your bike, these items may indeed offer some extra eyeball-grabbing power, but they can only be a small element in the whole road safety equation.

Peter Eland