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[The Bailey Works Super Pro Ultimate Facemelter Review](#)

September 26th, 2006 by Nick



The black model for review

Disclaimer:
As a product reviewer for Commute By Bike, I am providing my unbiased opinion of any products provided to us by any company. I do not possess any type of relationship with the product's company or parent companies. Companies that send in their goods to be reviewed do not compensate me in any way.

Product: [Bailey Works Super Pro Courier Bag](#)

Cost: \$139.00 - \$179.00

Sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL

My Background: I am 5'9", 155 lbs, and I have perfect hair. I ride an IRO Mark V fixed gear between Queens, Brooklyn, and Manhattan, for everything from commuting to bar hopping.

Testing Grounds: The dirty streets of New York.

Overview:
Okay, I love this bag. Absolutely love it. So much so that I couldn't bear to part with the test model and bought my own.

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Mine. Not yours.

The Bailey Works SuperPro is a workhorse. It is designed for constant use under extreme conditions – it's designed for professional couriers. So, I'm not a courier – why would I need one, and why a size large?

It's the sort of thing where you don't know you needed something until you have it. I try to use my bicycle as my sole means of transportation as much as possible, and sometimes, I have to move things from point A to point B. Sometimes these things are large and unwieldy, like, say a snare drum and stand, or a case of beer. This bag makes it easy.

Maybe you're saying to yourself that it couldn't possibly be convenient to carry around such a huge bag all the time, but brilliant design lends a hand here. The bag flattens when empty, and curves against your back nicely, feeling almost like a very small cape.



Full vs. Empty (and check out those reflectors)

Size:

I think RL established that the Bailey can handle large size loads when he [put his daughter in the bag](#) – and that was a size Medium (1300 cubic inches). I have a size Large (1800 cubic inches). Bailey Works takes a page from the book of fast food restaurants with its sizing, which ranges from Small to XX-Large (3020 cubic inches!). To put that into perspective, RL was carrying his daughter in a bag that is a 2 out of 5 on Bailey Works' scale. I can't compete with that, at least not without facing kidnapping charges.



Size Large



About 19 inches wide at the mouth

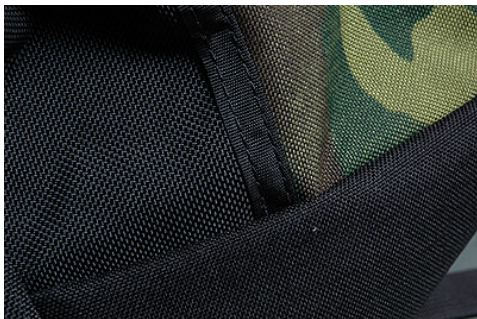
Weight:

Now, I don't own a scale, so I can't give you a figure, but the bag handles weight well. The heaviest load I've carried was a load of my wife's oversized art books after an afternoon at the Strand, and it was as much weight as I'd be comfortable carrying. For loads above 50 lbs, it's not the most comfortable option, but I ride a track bike with a rock-hard racing saddle - comfort is not my concern. Function is, and with this amount of weight, the bag held up just fine. Not even a hint of stretching in the seams. I regularly use it to carry groceries home, which usually includes a half gallon each of milk, orange juice and seltzer, occasionally a tub of yogurt, and past that, items of negligible weight, like cereal. I've never had a problem with this, but I recommend placing the orange juice and milk in the rear center of the bag on a hot day. It doesn't make a difference for the bag or the groceries, but when the temperature is high, the cool liquids feel great against a hot back.



There's room for more, if you know how to pack

I'm pretty confident that my own strength will fail before Bailey Works' workmanship.



Quality seams.

Waterproofing:

The Super Pro is lined with a garish yellow rubbery material with seams only down the sides. You may not be crazy about the color, and it gets grimy over time, but the bright yellow helps you find small objects in the bottom of the bag, and I'm sure I could take some dish soap if I cared about the grime, but I don't.

I considered hopping in the shower with the bag on, but for the sake of modesty, just take my word for it. I ride rain or shine, and when it rains, I bring a complete change of clothes to work in this bag. The contents of my bag have never gotten wet, even in downpours that fill the streets with so much water so fast that my pedals are dragging through it. I've ridden in weather that has soaked me from head to toe, the kind where you have to wring out your socks and your shoes take two days to dry, and still, nothing in the bag was wet.

The Shoulder Strap:



Strapped in

When I decided to buy myself a large messenger bag, the two brands I was considering were Bailey Works and Chrome. Chrome makes a fine bag by all standards, but the design of the shoulder strap on the Super Pro was what tipped the scales in my case. What distinguishes the Super Pro shoulder strap from that of almost every other messenger bag is that you can switch the shoulder on which the bag rests in under a minute. This means I don't have to order a specially made lefty bag that sits on the right shoulder (which Chrome does make), but it also means that I can switch if my right shoulder gets tired or injured. All you have to do to switch is unthread the strap from the clasps on each side of the strap, turn it around, and re-thread. The generous padding is sewn into the bag, and the strap attaches just outside of it.



The brilliant rethreadable clasp



This buckle splits the strap in half

The shoulder strap also has a large, heavy duty clip high on the chest which allows you to disconnect the strap rather than pulling the strap over your head – a must-have for carrying large loads. Incorporated into this buckle system is a great one-handed tighten-and-loosen mechanism, which you'll also find on other pro model courier bags. In short, there are two large D-rings along the strap. Pulling and releasing the top one loosens the strap, and pulling the lower ring tightens it. While you can tighten with one hard pull, it's better to loosen the strap in smaller steps, since you don't want it falling around your ankles. It's complicated to explain how this works, so here's a video of the strap in action:

*two pulls on the top ring loosen the strap,
and one pull on the lower ring tightens it up.*

Pockets:

On the outside under the flap, you get two cargo pockets on the front, both of which hold my hefty U-Lock, and a single diagonal pocket to the right, which is great for a water bottle. Inside the right cargo pocket is a small divider with some pen sleeves, perfect for your wallet. On the inside is a wide flap with diagonal pockets on each side of a large, always-open pocket, which I use for papers, tools, my iPod - anything I need to grab quickly. In front of this pocket is another of the same size, with a zipper. The rest of the bag is wide open.



Open, with exterior pockets





The cargo pockets - large enough for my U-lock

There are also two reflective stripes on the bag – one just above the lip of the flap, and another on the bottom. There is a small strap next to the top stripe that's meant to hold a blinker, and I keep one permanently attached.



NH stencil is reviewer's own addition

Underneath the bag you'll find two dangling female-end clips, which, when used with the straps that normally clip to the flap, allow you to strap a long tube across the bottom of the bag, though items attached this way do tend to slip over time. The flap, by the way, stays closed fine with velcro. You only really need those straps when the bag is overloaded.

As you can see, I got my bag in camo, but it's available in a range of colors that would get a nod from Martha Stewart.



Get one to match any outfit


You might see some people wearing messenger bags slung low around their hips or even over their bum. That's fine for walking around, but if you try wear your bag that low on a bike with any sort of forward posture, your day is going to get interesting fast. These bags are meant to be worn high on the back and as tight as possible, with a stabilizer strap attaching to the front from underneath the arm. This keeps your load in place on your back, and it is the correct way to wear the bag.


So why use a giant bag like this? Why not panniers? For me, it's a personal preference, and I have used both. For one, panniers affect a bike's handling, and weight that is on my back is weight that I can control, weight that I can shift in a swerve. Secondly, if it's strapped to my back, it's one less thing to detach when locking my bike on the street. You may like panniers, and I would certainly use them for touring, but for day to day tasks, this bag's for me.


I'm pretty sure I've covered every aspect of the bag, but if you have any questions, lay 'em on me.

In closing, I'd like to point out that Bailey Works is based in my hometown of Portsmouth, NH. I'd walked past their storefront countless times, but it wasn't until I moved to New York that I bought one. Did this bias my review in any way? Maybe.

27 Responses to "The Bailey Works Super Pro Ultimate Facemelter Review"

1.  [RL Policar](#) Says:
[September 26th, 2006 at 12:57 am](#)
Wow Nick, you were very thorough!

2.  [Dan](#) Says:
[September 26th, 2006 at 5:25 am](#)
It's funny to see a cammo bag with a big reflective stripe!
Great review.

3.  [Jay](#) Says:
[September 26th, 2006 at 7:26 am](#)
I don't think there was enough info on this review, needs more pics and at least 3 videos too. SHEESH!