



FASST COMPANY FLEXX HANDLEBARS

Transcending moto to bicycle

Fasst Company is best known for its innovative off-road motorcycle and ATV handlebars. Flexx handlebars, as the company calls them, are designed with elastomer dampers to help the bars do exactly what the name implies—flex. While flex generally isn't a positive attribute for mountain bikes, especially in a world where stiffer is always advertised as better, Fasst decided it was time to take what they learned from the motorcycle industry and bring that technology to mountain

bikes. The all-new Flexx MTB handlebars are designed to reduce vibration and help absorb shock, allowing riders to focus on the trails instead of their numb hands or burning forearms. We reached out to Fasst and asked if we could try the Flexx bars on our local trails. After testing these handlebars on our rockiest terrain with many different setups, we're ready to share our final thoughts.

Tech features: Fasst Company, located in Washington, Utah, designs and manu-

factures its handlebars in the USA, hence the American flag graphic printed on the front. Flexx bars are made from unidirectional carbon tubes that are sourced from Rock West Composites out of Salt Lake City. Fasst told us Rock West has several bike industry vets who helped play a key role in developing the right blend of carbon for the bars. The rest of the handlebars are constructed from 7075 aluminum and use titanium bolts. The bars have a width of 800mm and a 25mm rise with an 8-degree backsweep. Although these handlebars are mostly constructed from carbon tubes and aluminum, they will likely add 100 grams to your bike over a traditional handlebar due to the added weight of the vibration-damping elastomers, as well as the additional hardware. Our pair of test handlebars tipped the scales at 430 grams.

Fasst offers three different types of compression and rebound elastomers. The

red elastomers are the softest. The yellow ones, which come pre-installed, provide medium damping, and the orange ones offer the stiffest feel. The larger elastomers handle compression, while the smaller ones handle rebound. The rebound dampers are designed to prevent the handlebar from moving in an upward direction. Meanwhile, the compression elastomers control downward forces.

Fasst sells its mountain bike-specific handlebar for \$500. We know this is quite a shocking price for a handlebar; however, Fasst told us that a lot of labor goes into each bar to ensure quality. In fact, it takes Fasst five times longer to build its mountain bike bar than it does its moto bar. Every handlebar is seen by a high-level tech who meticulously preps and bonds the carbon tubes to the aluminum structure. Fasst then told us it's working hard to expand its demo program to help educate riders about the technology.

Setup: What sets the Flexx bar apart from other handlebars is its ability to be tuned specially for each rider's style, weight and size. We tested all three elastomer colors and immediately noticed a drastic change in handlebar feel. The red elastomers are designed for lightweight, non-aggressive riders around 150 pounds or less. The yellow ones are ideal for trail riders, and the orange ones are designed

specifically for aggressive downhill and enduro riders.

Swapping elastomers is a fairly straightforward process; however, having a friend handy while reinstalling the new elastomers will make things a little easier. The elastomers are held in place with titanium bolts that feature a 4mm Allen and a T-25 head. Once the bolts are removed, the bars are free to pivot out of the way, making it easy to pop out the old elastomers. During the reinstallation process, the bar needs to be slightly compressed, so having an additional set of hands can be helpful. We tested the bars with all three colors and then tried mixing different-colored compression and rebound elastomers for a more custom feel. Fasst has the ability to further customize handlebar feel by changing the elastomer height; however, the three rebound and compression elastomers provided will likely please the majority of riders.

Field test results: Out on the trails, the Flexx bars had a natural feel that surprised our testers. With the yellow dampers installed on our trusty test bike, we noticed only minor movement when landing hard off drops or blasting through high-speed chatter. This movement positively affected handling during harsh impacts. We switched to the red elastomers to see how the lightest tune would feel. Our testers immediately found this setting caused the bars to feel like a wet noodle; however, for the intended rider, this setup could be

ideal. The orange elastomers offered a stiff feel that was only noticed during big drops, fast G-outs and other aggressive trail features. For our 150–160-pound test riders, the orange elastomers were too stiff. We then tried mixing yellow compression dampers with orange rebound ones. This setup gave our handlebars a solid feel into corners and over rough trails while keeping the bars stiff when pulling up on the handlebars. Riders will want to experiment on their own to find the best setting for their style and weight. It's important to note that trimming the bars shorter will affect leverage and will require a different setup.

Flexx handlebars are undeniably expensive, but they offer top-notch American-made construction, and they truly work as claimed. We were able to ride trails that normally cause our hands and forearms to burn with little to no hand fatigue. Flexx bars work in unison with your suspension to improve small-bump compliance and absorb bumps and chop. If you have battled hand fatigue or arm pump, then the Flexx bars could help get you back out on the trails and keep you there longer. ☐

Hits

- Does an excellent job reducing trail vibrations
- Customizable for any rider
- Made in the USA

Misses

- Adds weight over traditional handlebars
- They cost \$500

