

Speedplay Syzr

Mountain bike pedals make a long-overdue leap

NOT MUCH HAS CHANGED with clipless mountain bike pedals over the last 20 years—and that's not an exaggeration. Most are still based on variations of Shimano's SPD or Time's ATAC system. Shimano's pedals grab a steel cleat with a spring-loaded jaw; Time's use wire bails that hook over bronze cleats.

The new Speedplay Syzr looks a lot like the original Shimano 737 SPD, but its retention hinges at the front, while Shimano's clips at the rear. Where things get really different is the cleat: The Syzr's comprises two concentric plates—one fixed to the shoe. The other, which engages with the pedal (and sports two V-shaped guides to facilitate the connection), rotates around the fixed piece.

Most off-road pedals rely on gaps between the cleat and pedal to provide some float. But on the Syzr, the rotating cleats perform this function, making for a solid connection between shoe and pedal. Speedplay claims this means power is

transferred more directly, and I'd agree: I felt none of the slight rocking that occurs with other pedals.

No other system gives you this much adjustability. You can change the amount of float by up to 10 degrees, and placing a washer between the cleat plates reduces float friction and further frees rotation. But this made my feet turn too quickly for my taste, so I opted to take the shim out.

Mud and water tend to interfere with clipping out of metal pedal systems, which would be exacerbated by the tight tolerance of the Syzr cleat and pedal. Speedplay embedded four ceramic rollers in the corners of the cleats to alleviate metal-on-metal friction. It works: I could clip out regardless of how gunked-up my pedals got.

The price may make some balk, but unlike SPDs, Syzrs can be rebuilt if they break. And after a long reign of me-too pedal designs and cleat interfaces that now feel sloppy compared with this one, it's refreshing to see someone make a mountain bike pedal with the attention to detail that we've come to expect from the rest of our gear.

—MIKE YOZELL

► **PRICE** \$199, stainless-steel spindles; \$389, titanium spindles ■ **WEIGHT** Pedals: 310 grams/pair, stainless steel spindles; cleats: 66g/pair