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Petzl zipka, zipka plus, tikka XP led lights

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- Gear reviews and tests - Lamps and Lanterns -



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Description :

Powerful compact head lights.

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The Petzl Zipka and Tikka models are incredibly convenient hand-free led lights.

The Petzl Zipka and Zipka Plus led lights are an interesting idea. they are specially compact head lamps, with their zip head band. The Tikka models have an elastic band.

The Petzl Zipka



It is a 3 leds light lamp powered by 3 AAA batteries. An interesting characteristic, is that instead of mounting it with an elastic strap to fit on the head, it is mounted with a winding piece, and the head band is replaced by a solid string. So the head band is fully retractable, no spare part to loose, no piece to fold, no parts that gets gripped in the rucksack.

Another view



The Zipka is meant to give light for 48 hours, but after 24 hours, it only has half it's original power.

The string winding works fine, and the lamp is not painful to wear on the head, yet the system has the advantage of being very compact.

The string and winding system



The switch works only for an on/off function, and I found it to be a pain, as the lamp can switch on easily when in the backpack, or worst the contact when on is not powerful enough, and the beam would shiver easily, or the switch would come back to off when you needed light.

A bit of work with a fine screw driver fixed the problem, but it was a lot of work to dismantle the system without breaking it. It may be a quality problem on mine, but it was there.

Showing the battery case opened



The system is not waterproof, nor water resistant, a shame!

The beam with a new battery is quite powerful, and lights at more than 50 metres, and is quite wide.

Price is close to 25 Euros [\[1\]](#).

Conclusion

A nice compact lamp. Mine had a defect. Clever system to install it on the head. Unfortunately not water-resistant

The Petzl Zipka Plus

The Plus model is an evolution of the standard model. It corrects the defects encountered there: The switch is electronic and well protected against involuntary switching.

There are now 4 ultra bright LEDs.



Zipka plus Great compact head light.

The Zipka + has four modes:

- ▶ Full, 80 hours battery life, 15 metre distance illumination.
- ▶ Medium, 120 hours, 10 metre.
- ▶ Low, 150 hours, 5 metre.
- ▶ Strobe, 400 hours, one strobe per second.

In reality the seeing distances in full darkness are further than the 15 metre of bright light announced by the maker, and are now getting close to the 70 metre.

Switching between the modes is done by successively pressing the button. There is a timeout after one second, which makes a deferred press to turn the light off.

The Full mode is really really bright, the power of a PAlight, but in a much larger beam (5 to 10 times the width).

The Strobe mode is a great security feature. The lower mode in addition to saving batteries are great for moments when less light is needed, like reading. This is a great light for reading in darkness, whether camping or not.

The retractable system still works the same way, allowing to be attached to the arm or wrist, but the lamp is unfortunately not waterproof.

The price of this upgraded version is 35 Euros.

Conclusion

A great lamp. It is very versatile, very powerful, a real head lamp that fits in the pocket.

The Petzl Tikka XP

The Tikka XP model is an evolution of the tikka models. It features a high power LED, and 5 modes. It also bears a wide angle lens for close range lighting. The model is now really water resistant, and the battery compartment closed with a torric joint.

There are two buttons, one allows ti switch through the modes: off, full, medium, low, strobe, while the the second

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button toggles the boost mode, which gives 50 % more intensity than the full mode for 20 seconds maximum.

There is a battery indicator which marks the 70% drained and 90% drained points.



Tikka XP Probably one of the best compact headlamps.

The Zipka + has 5 modes:

- ▶ Boost 50 metres, 20 seconds max.
- ▶ Full, 60 hours battery life, 35 metre distance illumination.
- ▶ Medium, 80 hours, 27 metre.
- ▶ Low, 120 hours, 18 metre.
- ▶ Strobe, 400 hours, one strobe per second.

The power and features of this version are absolutely excellent: Bright, with a built-in sliding wide angle lens, concentrated light beam without the lens, water resistant, battery indicator led, LED heat protection, works with 3 AAA batteries.

It is well worth actually to use the new 1.8 volts lithium batteries in these lamps, because they last 7 times longer than alkaline, weight a lot less, for not more than 2 to 4 times the price of good quality alkaline. Energizer by example does some of these.

The price of this upgraded version is around 42 Euro.

Conclusion

At least a model that is totally satisfying. As much I like the zip of the zipka for the gain of space, as much the elastic band of the Tikka is comfortable. As much the other models are closer to gadgetry, as much this one is a real powerful lamp that will provide enough light for a good night MTB session, and still allow you to read a good book without becoming blind. One of the first compact models to provide real all-round all-use light. Probably the best compact head lamp on the market at the moment I write this.

Post-scriptum :

It is to be noted that the head system, while excellent, does not provide the comfort of an elastic band, and that a little discomfort can be felt after wearing them around the head, after a few hours. It quickly disappears, dropping attaching the light to the wrist for 10 minutes, and in my opinion is not a problem when the extreme versatility of this lamp is taken into account. But for those which are concerned by this, the Tikka and tikka plus are the models with a classical elastic band.

Updated 03-Sep-2004, added Zipka plus Updated 20-Jan-2006, added Tikka XP

[1] =US\$