

# TESTED | FIVE TEN KESTREL REVIEW

20th February 2015



Beaten with Welsh mud and rain over the last few months and ready for more.

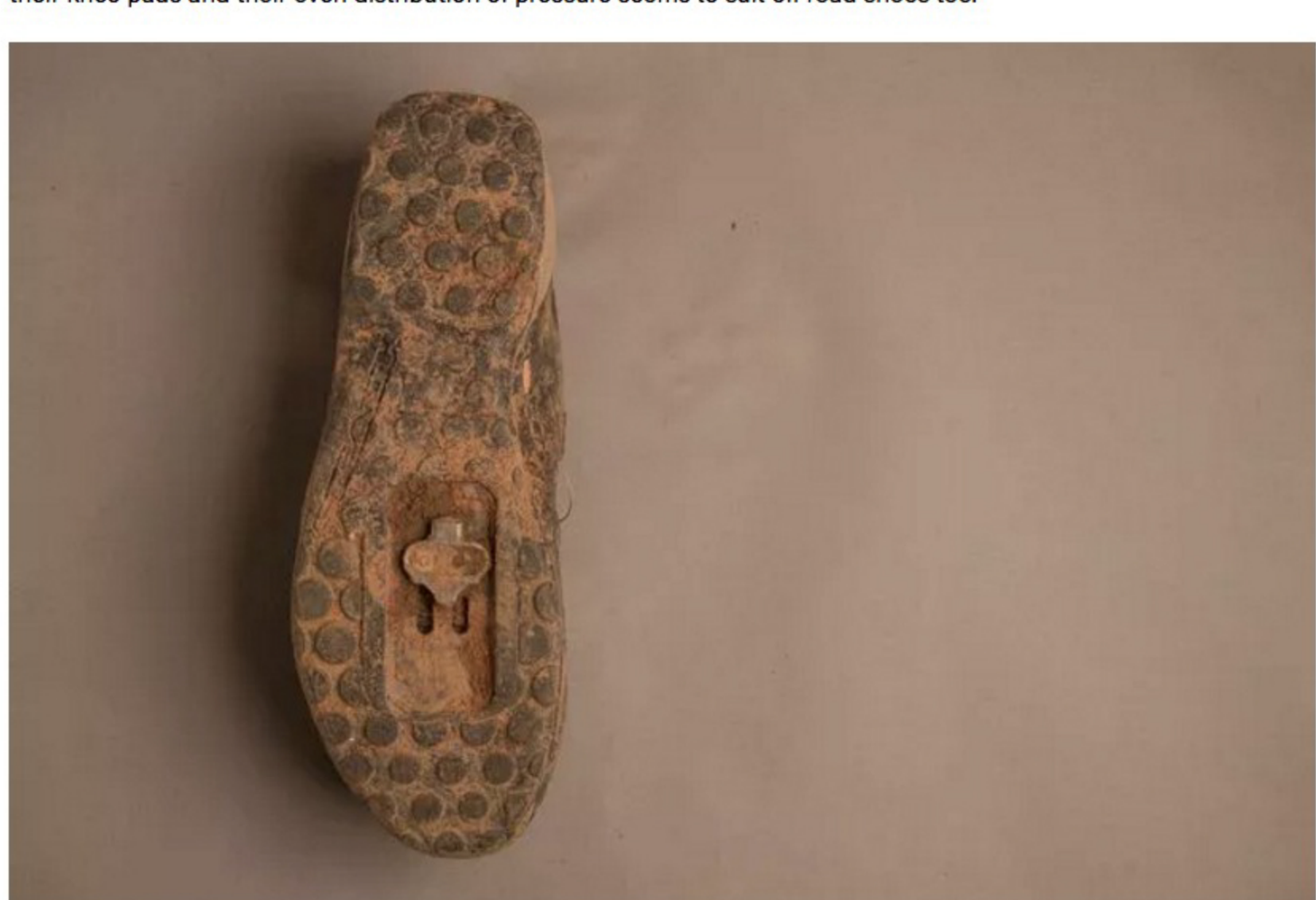
## FIVE TEN KESTREL REVIEW

Some things you just have to wait for. The all new Kestrel SPD shoe from FiveTen is very much a point in case. With over four years in development, feedback from Nico Vouilloz (amongst others), the waiting has been worth it. We first saw images of a new stiffer SPD shoe from FiveTen bearing the Kestrel name back in 2011 and the launch in spring 2015 is nicely timed with many riders returning to (or experimenting with) clipless pedals for enduro and stage racing.

So what exactly are FiveTen offering with the Kestrel shoe and who is it for? Visually this is a departure from the FiveTens you will be familiar with. A trimmed down, stiffer, performance shoe dedicated to the trail or enduro rider.

## CONSTRUCTION

The Kestrel has an upper constructed from a modern polyester fabric with a fully covered toebox for added weather resistance. Rubber bumpers around the front and rear of the shoe give additional protection from rocks and roots keeping with FiveTen's hard-hitting pedigree, this is no dainty XC only racer's shoe. The upper is tightened not by laces or velcro but a reliable and proven low profile ratchet dial and wire system from Boa. Well known in road shoes and snowboard boots we have seen the Boa getting into MTB in recent years, Dianese and Royal both use them in their knee pads and their even distribution of pressure seems to suit off road shoes too.



A mixture of Five Ten's signature rubbers and wide ranging cleat options meant we could personalise the fit exactly.

The sole...ah, Stealth rubber of course but in a dual compound and with a carbon infused shank for a seriously stiff sole. FiveTen have cleverly used two of their Stealth rubber compounds in the appropriate places. The harder compound C4 rubber is used around the cleat area to help avoid the shoe sticking to the pedal and resisting rotational 'float'. MI6, the softer, stickier rubber we know from the latest **Impact flat** and **clipless** shoes, is used on the toe and heel area to aid off the bike traction.

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Inside the Kestrel has an Ortholite insole for added comfort and a 'bellows-tongue' (the side of the tongue are attached next to the insole) which helps keep out trail rubble. The weight is competitive. Listed at 403g each shoe (we weighed a test shoe at 540g, with cleat and mud) similar to shoes offering this blend of performance and protection.



Getting the fit right is key on any shoe and the Kestrels were spot on for us.

## FIT:

At first we thought the Kestrels were a slim fit but after a few rides they bedded in nicely. The sole felt incredibly stiff from new, almost as stiff as a top flight XC race shoe.

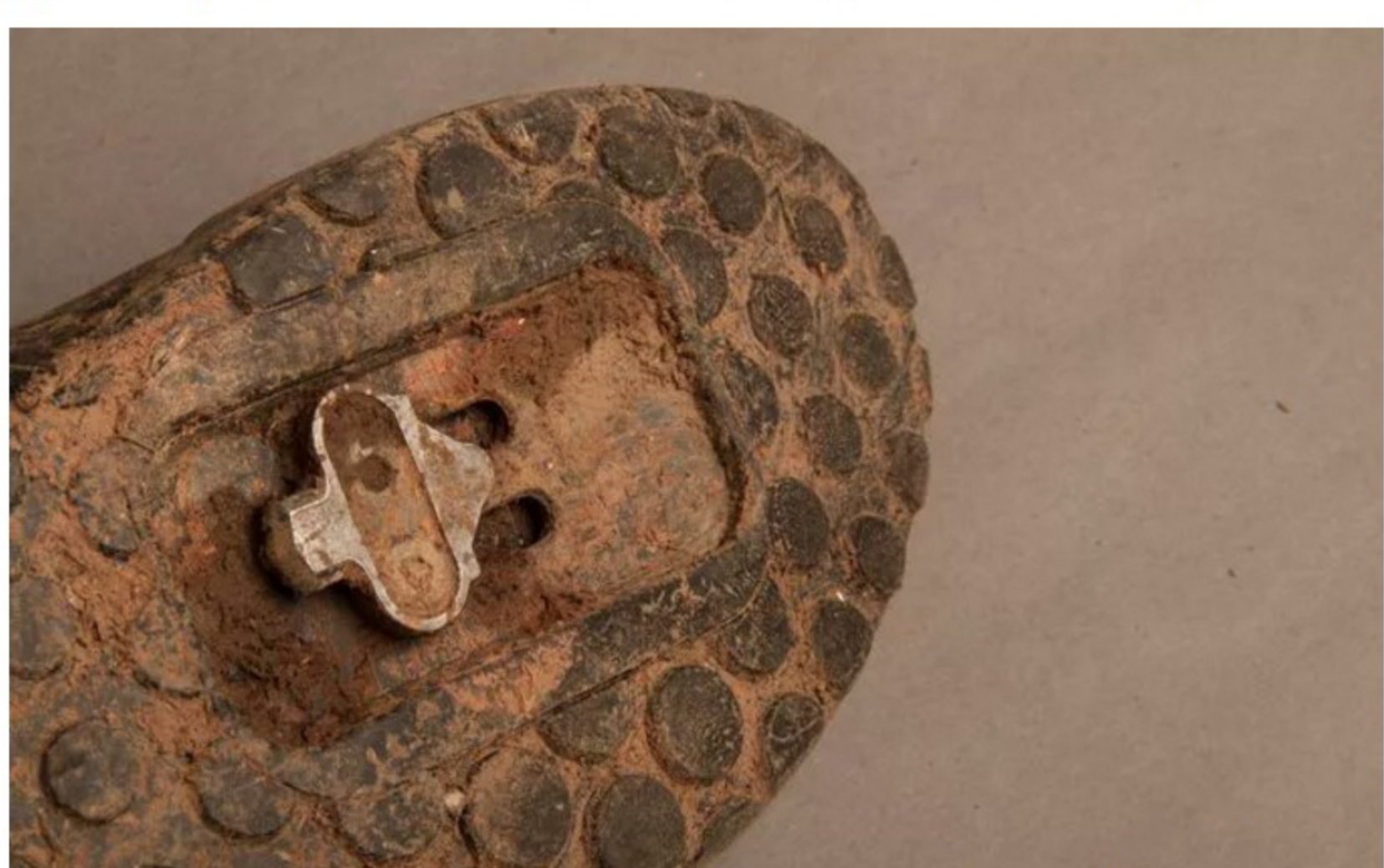


The magic is in the Boa dial.... This is a ratchet dial that tensions or releases a thin but strong wire pulling in the upper with even tension. Tighten the Boa correctly for a snug fit and the wire holds your foot snugly for both efficient pedaling and a natural walking feel. If you keep the upper loose then the sole stiffness will mean your heel lifting when you walk...so, crank it up! You can tell FiveTen have spent time working on this fit system right; try a pair on and you will be convinced. Don't be put off by the Boa system; this wire and dial

system takes is a great deal more reliable than you might think.

## TESTING:

We returned from the first ride with nothing but praise for these shoes. The Kestrels felt light and purposeful when putting the power down, with good comfort and weather/water resistance from the upper. We had no issues with getting the cleats far enough back to allow for heels down descending. The Boa ratchet is convenient to reach down and tweak when on the bike and there were no issues with knocking it on timber or rock. Off the bike, pushing back up, we were surprised just how walkable these shoes were considering the stiffness of the sole. The Stealth rubber gripped on wet greasy rocks and root but the way the Boa helped keep your heel in place was amazing.



It's definitely been muddy round these parts recently. Perfect conditions for trying these shoes out.

## CONCLUSION:

If you love FiveTens but want a shoe stiffer and lighter than current FiveTen models then look no further. If you have had an eye for FiveTens yet felt they have not offered a shoe for longer, harder rides then the Kestrels have your name on them.

Any downsides to these new shoes? Well, an initial pass around the office here at Dirt HQ raised questions of being 'too stiff?' and 'a bit of an XC shoe?' Well, as mentioned it didn't take many rides for the clipless users amongst us to be convinced by the Kestrels with the added stiffness not being an issue off the bike and the construction and Boa system justifying the price, which is on a par with similar footwear. These shoes are built to take some serious use, all year round.

Overall the Five Ten Kestrel shoe is a very well developed, high performance SPD shoe for the mountain biker, with great attention to detail, superb Boa fastenings and that Stealth rubber sole...winner!

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