

## Outdoor Gear Lab

August 31, 2017

Featuring: ForkLift

Monthly Traffic: 2,100,000

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/OutdoorGearLab-Yakima-083117>

### Yakima ForkLift Review



Price: \$159 List | **\$127.16** at CampSaver  
[Compare prices at 3 resellers](#)

Pros: Secure, stable in wind, versatile, will clamp to any type of crossbar, easy to assemble

Cons: Lock cores not included, will not hold bikes with 15mm or 20mm through axles without purchasing adapter

Bottom line: The Yakima ForkLift is a fork mount roof rack that excels at transporting bikes with standard quick release forks.

Editors' Rating: ★★★★★

Manufacturer: Yakima

### Our Verdict

The **Yakima ForkLift** is a high-quality fork mount roof rack, with versatility and ease of use setting it apart from other roof racks in the review. The **ForkLift** comes equipped with crossbar clamps that securely clamp to any cross bar: round, square or factory bars. With a 40lb weight capacity, the **ForkLift** transports most bikes by securely clamping the 9mm quick release fork. No contact is made with the frame, keeping your bike in perfect condition no matter the road conditions. An easily adjustable quick release clamp makes loading and unloading a breeze.

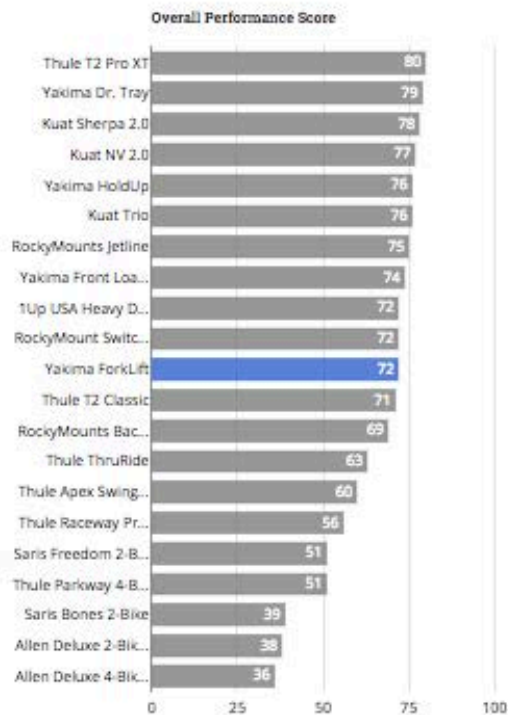


The **Yakima ForkLift** is a roof mount rack that uses a 9mm quick release lever to hold bikes by the front fork. It will securely hold any bike with a 9mm quick release fork and can manage other fork standards with the addition of adaptors. It has the unique ability to clamp to any crossbar, including round, square and factory crossbars.

## Performance Comparison



Yakima ForkLift on factory crossbars with aftermarket 15mm through axle adaptor.



## Ease of Everyday Use

This bike racks earned high marks and excelled in this category. We found it easy to use; the quick release clamp is easy to adjust to accommodate dropouts of varying thickness, and the rear wheel strap is easy to tighten. Being a fork mount rack, the front wheel of the bicycle must be removed in order to transport the bike, which can be an inconvenience. Other roof racks we tested such as the **Yakima High Roller** do not require removal of the front wheel, but the bike must be lifted much higher to load. Once fork dropouts are resting on the **ForkLift's** quick release skewer, the bike can be steadied with one hand while the clamp is adjusted to achieve a snug fit.

This particular model did not receive as high a score for ergonomics as our Editors' Choice, the **Thule T2 Pro XT**, primarily because loading requires bikes to be lifted above the level of your vehicle's roof. By design, all roof racks need more lifting and awkward movement than a trunk or hitch mount rack. Your vehicle's roof height, your height, and the weight of the bikes you will be loading all factor in when considering the ergonomic challenges of a roof rack.

## Ease of Removal and Storage

The cross bar clamps have three available settings; the top setting is used for round and square bars, and the lower two settings accommodate factory cross bars. T-bolts with hand-tightened knobs pass through the rack and are tightened by hand until snug. A bit of experimentation may be necessary to pick the optimal clamp position for factory crossbars, but we were able to get a good fit on all vehicles we tested with. The skewer slides through the rack, and the clamp lever is threaded on. The clamp lever can be oriented to the left or the right, allowing you to mount the rack on either side of your vehicle and no tools are required to install or remove the **ForkLift**. While we felt that installation was relatively painless, we would not want to take this rack on and off our vehicle on a daily basis.



The tray of the Yakima ForkLift can make contact with your rear hatch if your crossbars are mounted too far back.

If your vehicle has a rear hatch that swings up, make sure that the hatch will not hit the back end of the rack when opened. If it does, then you will either need to move your cross bars forward or reverse the orientation of the rack so that the bicycles face toward the rear of the vehicle.

## Versatility

This model receives high scores for versatility due to a crossbar clamp design that is compatible with round, square and almost any factory crossbars. This convenient feature allows the rack to be used on multiple different vehicles and eliminates the need to purchase a tower and crossbar system if your vehicle is equipped with factory crossbars.



### Ease of Assembly

Assembly is quick and straightforward with this contender, as the directions are clear and concise. Mounting the rack to a vehicle is also simple. The model arrived mostly assembled, and putting it in service is a matter of attaching it to your cross bars.

### Security

Our test rack did not come with lock cores, but they are available for the **ForkLift**, and when installed, the rack is quite secure, as fork mount racks are hard to beat from a security standpoint. Removing the bike from a locked fork mount requires power tools or a lot of time. The rear wheel is not locked and vulnerable to theft, but this is mitigated with a cable lock. The rack can be locked to the vehicle when not in use by locking the quick release. If you plan to use 15mm or 20mm through axle adaptors, the rapid locking release will not secure your bike. The only way to secure a bike when using adapters is with a cable lock.

### Durability

This model suffered no durability issues during our testing. The tray is stiff and sturdy and does not seem to flex, even with bikes mounted in heavy crosswinds. The quick release clamp and skewer did require a little grease following exposure to salt and sand spray from snowy winter roads and did not score as high in durability as the **Kuat NV** due to its many plastic components, including the crossbar clamps. With sun exposure and time, plastic loses strength and becomes brittle. We like the lack of moving parts and complicated clamping mechanisms employed by other tested racks. The simpler the better when it comes to long-term durability.

### Best Application

This rack is well suited to vehicles with low roof heights. We recommend it for any bike that has a standard 9mm quick release front fork. This rack also has the advantage of not using your frame as an attachment point, keeping your bike in pristine condition. If you have heavy bikes or bikes that utilize 15mm or 20mm through axles, take a look at our Editors' Choice **Thule T2 Pro** or the **Kuat NV**. The **ForkLift** is capable of transporting 15mm or 20mm through axle equipped bikes with the addition of adaptors, but it loses its security features and requires cable locks.

### Value

At \$159, if you plan to use factory crossbars, this model is a good value. There are other less expensive fork mount roof racks, such as our Best Buy award winner, the **RockyMounts Pitch Fork**, but with the **ForkLift** you get the added versatility of being able to use it with factory crossbars. We would like to see lock cores included for this price, but the **ForkLift** is a refined product and offers versatility that many of its competitors cannot match.

### Conclusion

The **Yakima ForkLift** offers incredible versatility. With the ability to clamp to any crossbar, is unlikely to become obsolete with the purchase of a new vehicle. It is secure, stable and easy to install. If you are looking for a fork mount roof rack to complement your vehicle with factory equipped crossbars, look no further.