



Engearment

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LevelingUp

Featuring: Dr.Tray

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Adios, Hold Up. The quest for finding a better bike rack has finally ended with the introduction of Yakima's Dr. Tray.

At \$579, the most noticeable difference between Dr. Tray and the Hold Up is the price. Dr. Tray is a \$150 premium over the Hold Up, but the former is a premium product and superior in almost every way: the rear hatch can be swung open by tilting the rack, the SpeedKnob removes the wobble out of the rack when driving, and the RemoteControl tilt lever is user-friendly. Finally, at 39 lbs., Dr. Tray is considerably lighter than its older brother, the 59 lb. Hold Up.

Yakima Bike Racks

While I've always been a Yakima aficionado, my history with their bike racks is long and varied. Starting with the Universal Forklift that crowned my 2000 Volkswagen Jetta during my graduate school years, to the Double Down 4, and more recently, the Hold Up, I've known my fair share of the variety of bike racks Yakima has to offer.

For me, switching out bike racks every few years has always been about necessity, not one-upmanship. The larger my bike stable expanded and my circle of cycling friends grew, the further I traveled for adventure, and the more particular I became about finding a rack that would suit all of my evolving needs. Consequently, I embraced the tray life several years ago.



When it comes to tray racks, the Fourtiner tray rack was never a consideration because I couldn't bear the thought of a clamp on my Trek Lush Carbon's paint. While the Hold Up eliminated my endless battle with straps and playing Tetris with different sized bike frames (Double Down 4), it also removed the need to stand on a step stool to properly secure bikes (Double Down 4 and Universal Lift). As a petite person, I needed a bike rack where I could easily load and unload bikes and not waste time or rely on the help of others.

Most problematic about the Hold Up is that it was extremely heavy; tilting it down required two people, and did not allow easy access to grab gear from the back hatch. Dr. Tray eliminated those key issues.

User-Friendly Assembly

Dr. Tray arrived with easy to follow assembly instructions and visual representations. Each step was clearly described and it did not take me all afternoon to put it together as I had anticipated. (IKEA can take a leaf out of Yakima's book.) In fact, the total assembly time was around 30 minutes. A more competent person could probably get it done in 10.



After the main piece was installed into a 2" hitch receiver, Dr. Tray revealed not one, but two pleasant surprises: the SpeedKnob and the RemoteControl tilt lever.

The cam mechanism (dubbed the SpeedKnob by Yakima) secures the rack tightly and eliminates wobbling into the hitch receiver. After installing a safety retaining pin and turning the SpeedKnob clockwise for a few turns, the rack was securely mounted into the hitch receiver. This is a feature that I've long admired in Kuat racks.



Secondly, Dr. Tray includes a RemoteControl tilt lever to lower the rack. This is a much improved design than the spring pin used in the Hold Up. The latter of which required two people to lower the rack if it was loaded with bikes. A firm squeeze of the Dr. Tray RemoteControl tilt lever, and I was able to rotate the main arm parallel with the ground to start installing trays.

JAM COLLECTIVE



It's Tray Time!

To install the trays, you flip up the two adjustable friction levers and slide the first tray into place. While it is a bit of a snug fit, the tray easily slides into place.

Position the tray between the two marks indicated maximum range, put the levers down to lock it into place, and then install the second tray. Rear wheel trays were installed by aligning the mounting holes and sliding in the retaining pin. Push the snap ring into place, and voila! The tray is secured to the rack.



Admittedly, the most frustrating part about the installation process was snapping the snap ring into place. I just couldn't do it. Holes at the end for a snap ring were absent, and I don't own a snap ring tool. So, armed with my friend's needle nosed pliers, I was eventually able to seat it.

Loading bikes onto Dr. Tray could not be simpler. Engage the RemoteControl tilt lever, lower the trays to a horizontal position, and extend the swing arms. Like the Hold Up, after lifting the bike into place, snugly clamp the front tire with the swing arm and fasten the rear wheel strap securely.

Initial Impressions

Overall, Dr. Tray is a good tray rack. Its outside competition would be either the Thule T2 Pro XT 9035XT (\$579) or the Kuat NV 2.0 (\$629).

While the SpeedKnob and RemoteControl features and overall weight make Dr. Tray superior to the Hold Up and worth the asking price, it does have some room for improvement.

For starters, "proper" snap rings to retain the rear tray mountain pin would be nice. Secondly, the arms on the Hold Up are preferable because they seem to release bikes easier than the clamps on Dr. Tray.



From an aesthetic perspective, Yakima would do well to use less plastic. The Universal Forklift I owned had taken a beating from the sun and faded considerably, thus affecting its resale value. A friend of mine had suggested wiping a UV inhibitor a few times a year on the plastic to prevent racks from looking prematurely aged.

When fully loaded, Dr. Tray extends nearly four feet from the bumper. To increase visibility, perhaps Yakima will consider selling auxiliary tail lights or reflective tape especially for their tray racks.

Finally, it would be nice if Yakima racks upgraded to heavier locks to deter bike theft. As someone whose friends have had bikes stolen from the bike racks of their vehicles in broad daylight, I pay special attention to this feature.

Versatility

With the exception of a large tandem or a recumbent, Dr. Tray will hold any combination of whips in your stable, including road bikes and fat bikes. I was also pleased to see plenty of clearance for disc brakes on my Surly Straggler. Its bump absorbing oversized trays are also ideal for carrying fat bikes.

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\$579.00	\$579.00	\$599.00	\$228.95	\$229.00	Yakima EZ+1 Add-C
Buy Now	Buy Now	Buy Now	Buy Now	Buy Now	\$239.00
					Buy Now

For big weekend expeditions, the \$229 EZ +1 extension can be added, and Dr. Tray can accommodate up to three bikes. A family or group of four would probably prefer to continue using the Hold Up and its ability to extend to hold up four bikes. Dr. Tray is available in both 2" and 1.25" models to fit standard hitch receivers.

Dr. Tray is a great choice for someone who owns a variety of bikes and participates in different recreational cycling events. With its lighter weight and use-friendly assembly, expect to see Dr. Trays dominating the trail head parking lots in the future.