

COMPARISON TEST  
**CAMERA STRAPS TEST**

The world of single-strap camera supports is a veritable melting pot of styles, fabrics, design, features and technology – you're bound to find one that suits your shooting style. We tested ten different models from manufacturers big and small to find the best

WORDS CHARLOTTE GRIFFITHS

It's surprising how many people stick with the neck strap that came in their camera's box when there's such a wide variety of feature-rich camera supports on offer. Running out of places to store memory

cards? Need more padding? Don't want your camera stolen? Look no further. I tested a variety of single-strap camera supports, both shoulder/neck straps and sling, loop or cross-body types, all of which offer

something different to your box-supplied support. To test, I used an Olympus E-30 and 12-60mm lens (weighing 1.3kg) plus a Nikon D3s with 70-200 VR (weighing 3.1kg) and got both a male and female opinion. →



**Black Rapid RS-5 / RS-W1**

£69/£57 NYLON, STEEL, RS-5 HAS SILENT POUCHES, RS-W1 IS CURVED FOR STOCKISTS CALL 01782 753304

Black Rapid is a relative newcomer to the UK and specialises in sling-style straps: the RS-5 comes with silent accessory pouches and the RS-W1 (left) is curved for female shooters. The Black Rapid straps feature two stoppers (called bumpers) that limit the free-sliding camera to a section of the strap, which I found better than the stopper-less style. The metal camera attachment device makes the slide much smoother and the carabiner-type clip is reassuring.

The RS-5 has a large accessories pouch with a silent-opening magnetic clasp that's not strong enough to affect memory cards. It'll take business cards, a mobile phone, extra batteries and cards, and also conceals

the extra strap when adjusting the length. This was easy to use when on my shoulder and offered acres of storage – I ended up wondering what else I could put in it.

The accessory pouches didn't seem to affect the RS-5's performance adversely, and as a woman, the female-friendly RS-W1's curved padding definitely made that strap fit much more closely.

Both straps were comfortable to wear, though when using longer lenses there's the worry of screwing the connector into the lens' tripod mount, leaving the body free.

However, there's no getting away from it – these are the most expensive straps we tested.

**HOW IT RATES**

**FEATURES** 24/25  
Silent pockets excellent/curved padding comfy, metal connector makes sliding quick

**COMFORT/SECURITY** 24/25  
Can be concealed behind coat, comfy

**PERFORMANCE** 23/25  
Supported both cameras well

**VALUE FOR MONEY** 21/25  
Impressive, but very expensive

**OVERALL** 92/100  
Great, but expensive – one for the wishlist

**PROS** Easy to set up, comfortable, RS-5 offered extra storage, RS-W1 curved

**CONS** Price



**Custom SLR C-Loop + Split Strap**

C-LOOP + SPLIT STRAP £36 NEOPRENE AND NYLON SPLIT SHOULDER STRAP WWW.CUSTOMSLR.COM

Based in San Francisco, Custom SLR is a new company whose Split Strap camera strap design was funded by the public via the website Kickstarter. The funding request paid off in March 2011 and the straps are now available to buy.

The split design allows weight to be distributed more evenly. For this test we tried the more traditional camera strap and the 'Glide' loop version: the latter doesn't have quite as smooth an action as other slide straps. That's the only major niggle: the Split Strap's design makes it noticeably comfortable on the shoulders, even when weighed down by the D3s. When the Nikon was on the Gliding Strap, the stopper made it feel more secure as it was

slightly less free-roaming – and with both cameras, the non-glide version of this strap was one of the most comfortable we tested.

The C-Loop connecting device in itself is impressive: the C folds out to form a handle when turning the screw and the two arms freely spin, making set-up very easy. On both versions of this strap it connects to the camera via two nylon cords that you attach to the C Loop on the right by looping them through each other – this looked less secure but seemed fine when testing.

On the underside of the split shoulder pad area are sticky custom logos that help reduce slippage and the hole in the centre of the pad made it comfortable to wear on the neck.



**Gripper by Domke (741-1BK)**

£15 NATURAL RUBBER AND HEAVY-DUTY COTTON WEBBING, GRIPS SHOULDER WWW.DOMKEBAGS.CO.UK

Another quick-release strap, this is Domke's bestselling accessory by far and claims to offer the same non-slip security as the company's camera bags. Features-wise, it's much more stripped down than other manufacturers' straps and comes with two metal rings and leather triangles that offer extra protection should your camera not come with its own eyelets. On our test cameras the Olympus didn't have eyelets so I threaded the strap through the metal bars on the camera's body, whereas on the D3s I replaced the manufacturer rings with the Domke versions.

The nylon and rubber strap itself is comparatively small, measuring just 50cm including its loops. The

rest of the length and any adjusting required is done within the thinner, nylon quick-release straps. These straps are secured by plastic-coated metal carabiner-style locks, which are strengthened and supported by subtly branded leather ends. These sections connected to the camera are much longer than on the Tamrac so depending on how you've adjusted them, you could end up with 30cm of strap flapping on either side.

When on the D3s this strap started cutting in, but was definitely more comfortable when on the E-30 and would be fantastic for CSC users.

Perfect for street photography or casual use – plus the stripped down appearance may appeal.

**HOW IT RATES**

**FEATURES** 22/25  
Simple – quick release and gripping rubber tracks offer non-slip performance

**COMFORT/SECURITY** 22/25  
Awkward on heavier cameras – ideal for lighter set-ups

**PERFORMANCE** 23/25  
Definitely didn't slip off

**VALUE FOR MONEY** 23/25  
One of the cheaper straps on test

**OVERALL** 90/100  
One for those who value simplicity

**PROS** Didn't slip off shoulder, streamlined look, quick-release straps

**CONS** Not practical for larger cameras, no give



**Hama Camera Strap Pro II (027506)**

£34 NEOPRENE & NYLON, TURNS INTO HAND STRAP, ACCESSORY POCKETS WWW.HAMA.CO.UK

More of a bat-belt than a camera strap, the Hama Camera Strap Pro II comes with two removable accessory cases and a secret hidden feature – the main body of the strap detaches, enabling you to turn the quick-release sections into a hand strap (complete with neoprene sleeve to cover the joining section) and travel even lighter. This is an ingenious use of those remaining 'quick-release' sections that other manufacturers would do well to adopt. You do pay for the cleverness though: this is one of the more expensive straps on test.

Secure and stable as a shoulder strap, the bulky neck rest is noticeable when worn around the neck, and those seemingly useful

accessory cases do flap around a little when moving at speed. This would also work as a cross-body strap, though women may have to remove the accessory cases altogether. Speaking of those, the accessory cases are big enough to hold extra batteries and memory cards and the larger is a perfect fit for an iPhone. You can also add extra packs via the connectors and convert them to belt pouches, if that's your thing.

This is an impressive strap that would appeal to those who want the versatility of a hand strap on occasion. Also ideal for those who need to carry a lot of extra paraphernalia with them but don't want to carry a bag.

**HOW IT RATES**

**FEATURES** 24/25  
Transforming into a hand strap impressed us

**COMFORT/SECURITY** 23/25  
Stayed on shoulder well though bulky while round the neck

**PERFORMANCE** 23/25  
Both cameras supported well

**VALUE FOR MONEY** 22/25  
Expensive compared to others, though hand strap option is impressive

**OVERALL** 92/100  
A good choice for those who want options

**PROS** Liked the convertability of the strap – effectively two straps in one

**CONS** Bulky neck padding, accessory bags potentially irritating



### LowePro Voyager C

£15 NEOPRENE AND NYLON WEBBING, LEATHER ACCENTS, DESIGNED FOR ADVENTURING [WWW.LOWEPRO.CO.UK](http://WWW.LOWEPRO.CO.UK) VITAL STATISTICS...

Designed for adventure photographers, the Voyager C is typical LowePro fare: well-designed and seemingly thought out with photographers in mind. Another quick-release strap, this is connected to the camera via triangular metal rings that are nail-breakingly fiddly to connect but once they're on, they're on. If your camera doesn't offer these eyelets they're easily removable. The strap's double ladder locks keep your camera extra secure and certainly look the part, plus the large clip buckles are sturdy and would withstand any jolts caused by moving quickly over unlevel terrain. The 2in-wide breathable neoprene neck/shoulder padding area is comfortable and flexible enough for

looking up when it's worn on the back of the neck. A peculiar-looking non-slip backing on the padding's underside helps to keep it on your shoulder, and works even when coupled with the weighty D3s. The C notation in the strap's name marks it out as curved for ergonomic comfort – the strap is also available in S configuration, which is designed for cross-chest wear. This is a fraction too short to wear across the chest. On the strap itself, the accessory pouch is slim and discreet: I didn't even notice it at first. It's easily detached via Velcro and holds two CF cards comfortably. The construction of the strap is sleek and sturdy and I thought this was one of the better-looking on test.

HOW IT RATES	
<b>FEATURES</b>	23/25
Accessory holder, quick-release straps and non-slip raised design	
<b>COMFORT/SECURITY</b>	24/25
A lot of give thanks to the neoprene and double ladder locks stop any slippage	
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>	23/25
Quick to set up and flat against the body for when on the move	
<b>VALUE FOR MONEY</b>	24/25
Great all-round strap and very good value	
<b>OVERALL</b>	94/100
An excellent choice for upgrading your strap	
<b>PROS</b>	Neoprene construction, subtle card holder, double ladder locks
<b>CONS</b>	Fiddly metal connectors – none really



### PacSafe Carrysafesafe 100

£17 NYLON, NEOPRENE, STAINLESS STEEL WIRE SLASHPROOF AND SUPER SECURE [WWW.PACSAFE.COM](http://WWW.PACSAFE.COM) VITAL STATISTICS...

This strap boasts turn and lock strap hooks, translating as the most complex carabiner-style clips I've ever seen. I also pushed these further than they were meant to go and I'm not sure how long the locks would last, though they're certainly clever. Once this is on, it's not going to be taken off again in a hurry. Neoprene sleeves slide down each side of the strap to cover the buckles, making it even more subtle and secure, and also having the effect of covering any potential areas of irritation. They also make for a good place to rest the hand while carrying the camera on a shoulder. A nice touch. Unlike SunSniper, PacSafe won't put cash on the line, but it does claim

that its strap is slash-proof and offers many anti-theft features such as the wire within the strap itself. The straps are also edged in a hard-wearing nylon that's stitched down to help resist fraying, and this is the only strap on the test that had this particular feature. There were also no loose ends: everything was stitched into place. It was perfectly fine with the Olympus E-30 but proved a little uncomfortable with the D3s and 70-200mm combo. The strap has no shock absorbance or give so moving at speed was a little awkward. I was pleasantly surprised by this: it's a comfortable strap to use and would help assuage fears when travelling with a DSLR.

HOW IT RATES	
<b>FEATURES</b>	23/25
Neoprene sleeves and super security, plus quick-release straps	
<b>COMFORT/SECURITY</b>	24/25
Not going anywhere, though not comfy with larger DSLRs	
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>	23/25
Seems secure and didn't slip	
<b>VALUE FOR MONEY</b>	23/25
One of the cheaper straps on test	
<b>OVERALL</b>	93/100
A comfortable strap that offers security	
<b>PROS</b>	Sliding neoprene sleeves covering buckles, security features
<b>CONS</b>	Not suitable for heavy DSLR and lens



### Papstrap

£37 (INCLUDING NEXT DAY DELIVERY) NYLON AND METAL TRIPOD MOUNT STRAP [WWW.PAPSTRAP.CO.UK](http://WWW.PAPSTRAP.CO.UK) VITAL STATISTICS...

I could instantly see the appeal of this style of strap – with both hands free this was a refreshing change. Screwing the strap into the tripod mount was very easy to do and it was also easy to swap between cameras. The PapStrap is super long and if I was keeping it, I'd probably cut the excess off once at the desired length. The strap was only 1in so didn't cause too much discomfort when worn across the chest, plus the weight did genuinely feel better distributed across my body. My male helper had no complaints. To take a picture you simply slide the camera up into shooting position. No straps threatened to obscure my vision. It was also easy to conceal the

camera behind my back by wearing a coat, though this did leave me with a slightly peculiar hunchback when carrying the D3s. Speaking of the Nikon, I attached the PapStrap to the 70-200mm's tripod mount as instructed, though this concerned me as the camera body itself was no longer secure. Food for thought, though wasn't an issue with the E-30 when screwed into the camera body. Perhaps a second screw connector would give extra reassurance. Another niggle is the metal clip used to connect the strap to the ring on the tripod mount: it would be better with a carabiner-style screw to give added security to the camera when attached.

HOW IT RATES	
<b>FEATURES</b>	22/25
Clever mounting system, non-slip raised bumps on shoulder pad	
<b>COMFORT/SECURITY</b>	22/25
Bit awkward across chest for women – fine for men and distributes weight well	
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>	23/25
Gets camera into position fast and does the job	
<b>VALUE FOR MONEY</b>	22/25
Pricy for what it is	
<b>OVERALL</b>	89/100
A very 'keep it simple' sling strap	
<b>PROS</b>	Clever mounting system, simple to set up and use, comfortable
<b>CONS</b>	Feels a bit worrying when connected to a heavy lens, no locking carabiner



### SunSniper Steel

£49 POLYESTER AND STEEL, WHICH IS UNCUTTABLE [WWW.TFC.CO.UK](http://WWW.TFC.CO.UK) VITAL STATISTICS...

Another sling-style cross-body strap, the SunSniper has had rave reviews for quite a while. Supplied with a freely rotating screw mount that comes with a rubber washer to avoid scratching the bottom of your camera or lens, the SunSniper Steel connects to the D-ring on the tripod via a small but sturdy carabiner. I still feel uncomfortable attaching it to the lens mount of the 70-200mm f/2.8 – but maybe I just need to get over this. An anti-cut steel cord runs through the whole of this sling strap and SunSniper is so confident in its security that if a camera thief manages to cut your SunSniper, you're insured to 400€ or \$500. In use, the strap is comfortable to wear and the rounded edges on the

camera connector give it a smooth action when sliding your camera up to take a picture. The stretchy shock-absorber section seems to work well. The strap itself is 1in wide and I found that it started to cut in a little on my side after extended use. My only gripe is the padding section that sits on the shoulder of the wearer. This is a little bulky and the edges started to rub after a while, though it does help to tidy away the loose ends of the strap by Velcroing them inside. It can also be removed for using smaller cameras, though the comfort level suffers slightly. SunSniper says that the strap should be able to "form itself snug-tight to the shape of every individual body" – and it certainly did that.

HOW IT RATES	
<b>FEATURES</b>	24/25
Smooth and easy slide action and freely rotating camera mount	
<b>COMFORT/SECURITY</b>	23/25
Evenly distributes weight, steel wire and carabiner makes it safer	
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>	24/25
Glide action and secure as well	
<b>VALUE FOR MONEY</b>	22/25
Expensive, but performs well	
<b>OVERALL</b>	93/100
Expensive but a great all-rounder	
<b>PROS</b>	Easy to set up, simple operation, comfortable, secure
<b>CONS</b>	Didn't feel secure on lens, shoulder pad rubbed a bit



### Tamrac Boomerang N5057

£18 NEOPRENE AND NYLON BOOT THREAD WITH CARD POCKETS [WWW.INTRO2020.CO.UK](http://WWW.INTRO2020.CO.UK) VITAL STATISTICS...

The Tamrac Boomerang requires you to attach two miniature straps to your camera in order to use the quick-release aspect of the strap, which initially looked quite complicated but are surprisingly simple to attach. Once they're on, detaching your camera from the strap for tripod work is refreshingly quick – though you are left with two shorter straps dangling from your camera at all times. In use, the strap has a lot of give or 'bounce' in it thanks to its neoprene construction. On the D3s it stretched but still supported the camera and showed no danger of snapping. It's definitely a shoulder strap or neck strap rather than a cross-body strap and the neoprene is ergonomically

curved (hence 'Boomerang', we're guessing) to fit into the contours of a shoulder – plus you can quickly reverse it to have your camera lens pointing in to your body, if that's how you prefer to travel. The neoprene does tend to slide but it took some seriously exaggerated slumping of shoulders to make the camera actually fall off. Two smaller pockets allow you to keep CF and SD cards within easy reach – with a maximum of three CF cards in each. Another unexpected touch is that upon lifting the camera to the eye, the side strap folds to one side rather than across the viewfinder and obscuring vision. All in, this is a nice all-rounder and good value.

HOW IT RATES	
<b>FEATURES</b>	23/25
Neoprene construction and card pockets always come in handy	
<b>COMFORT/SECURITY</b>	23/25
Ergonomic curving makes it comfortable to wear on shoulder	
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>	23/25
Supported both test cameras well and feels secure with minimum sliding	
<b>VALUE FOR MONEY</b>	23/25
Excellent choice to replace manufacturer strap	
<b>OVERALL</b>	92/100
Great value for those who value storage	
<b>PROS</b>	Comfortable, stretchy neoprene and useful quick-release buckles
<b>CONS</b>	Can slide off the shoulder



### Think Tank Camera Strap V2.0

£20 COTTON, METAL AND LEATHER, NON-SLIP ON BOTH SIDES [WWW.SNAPPERSTUFF.COM](http://WWW.SNAPPERSTUFF.COM) VITAL STATISTICS...

This strap has been designed to reduce bulk and increase portability of your camera – and it certainly does that. As the name suggests, this is one for those who want to level up their existing manufacturer strap: made from nylon, leather and metal, the V2.0's key feature is the non-slip silicon patterning on both sides of the cotton strap, making it resist slippage even when twisted round. This sounds like something too simple to be highlighted, but you'd be surprised how many straps only had the non-slip markings on one side. In use, this strap's stripped back design meant there was no padding or shock absorption in evidence so it did start to cut in when used with the

Nikon combination, but if you own any of Think Tank's photo backpacks the strap can be connected for better support over longer periods of time. It was fine for casual use – think the level of comfort of your current camera strap – and it certainly didn't slip anywhere, even when tested on a nylon jacket. The cotton construction is also nicer to hold in the hand than manufacturer-own brand straps, which tend to be made from nylon, but the simple construction of the V2.0 is unavoidable – this is definitely one for those photographers who don't want any bells and whistles, extra padding or secret compartments on their strap.

HOW IT RATES	
<b>FEATURES</b>	22/25
Non-slip on both sides, which is clever, but that's it	
<b>COMFORT/SECURITY</b>	22/25
Cuts in with larger DSLRs, great for smaller or CSC set-ups	
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>	23/25
Did not slip off shoulders, even with serious shrugging	
<b>VALUE FOR MONEY</b>	22/25
There are cheaper straps that offer more	
<b>OVERALL</b>	89/100
A level-up from your current strap	
<b>PROS</b>	Non-slip, stripped down design, compatible with range of bags
<b>CONS</b>	Feature-poor, cuts in with larger DSLRs