

REVIEW: Xion PG Long sleeve jacket – by stuntteam Agilitas (Sep. 2011)

My stuntteam, Agilitas, is mainly specialized in live stunt events. Live performances do not allow mats to be hidden which is the case in movie stunts. This is why we have high expectations when it comes to padding. Until now we were using motocross padding that was only partially suitable for us. Some time ago I purchased the Xion PG Long sleeve jacket. For me as a stuntman / coordinator, the most important thing with protective gear is: freedom of movement, level of protection and discreetness. This review will focus on these 3 criteria.

Freedom of movement – Stunt/body protection should enable a stunt performer full freedom of movement. The Xion PG long sleeve jacket is excellent from this point of view. The only limitation I've experienced was while performing a back handspring. One definitely needs to spend some time adjusting the technique to the possibilities of the padding. The padding is very comfortable to wear thanks to the special materials (breathability, sweat absorption etc.) Those features are appreciated when one has to spend 18 hours in a row wearing it. (a duration I spent in it during a live stunt show). I would furthermore welcome additional padding in the hip area which would fix the feeling of loose fit. Nevertheless when it comes to the freedom of movement this padding is the best in the current market.

Level of Protection - D30 material is a real revolution when it comes to impact absorption so I am going to focus more on how it has been used in the padding itself. Arm and chest protection is indeed superior, even during long stair falls or even when being thrown on a table or other furniture. Unfortunately the product has 2 weak spots, where I was forced to use additional padding to fix it.

First weak point is the length of the back protector, which is rather too short and it doesn't protect the lower back area (lumbar vertebrae L1-L6). This kind of protection is crucial during advanced stunts (stairs falls combined with falling over handrails, car hits, or advanced throws for 2m+ height). Ideally the back piece should be longer to cover the tail bone area. On the other hand, a good protective short could solve this problem if you combine it with the jacket.

The other thing is a missing extra padding layer on the back that would absorb minor impacts coming from fighting scenes or falls from a low height. This is important from the point of view of a long term usage of the padding. Increasing the thickness would prevent joint deterioration and increase the wearing comfort. Apparently, 18 mm backpads are available too.

Discretion - An ideal protective garment should be invisible for the audience. The Xion PG Long sleeve jacket is worn very covert and even attentive audience would not notice it.

Conclusion: The Xion PG Long sleeve Jacket is a unique product - a true stuntmen revelation, bringing a clever solution to our needs. When taking the price into account my excitement was dimmed only by the two above mentioned flaws. You would expect to find them in a cheaper product. But on the other hand, with those two things fixed I would be happy to pay even more for it to get a complete protection. Nevertheless it has the potential to be the "must have" for every stuntman.