



## Komperdell FXP4 Cloud Compact Poles Review



*Our Komperdell FXP4 Cloud Compact Poles review details a high quality and creatively designed product from this long established Austrian manufacturer. We hope you find it useful.*

We are lucky to regularly be offered innovative products to review. It is a privilege we appreciate and a responsibility we don't take lightly. Over the years this has included many types and styles of trekking and ski poles. Poles have continued developing in design and materials and have reached a high level of sophistication. We've certainly tested many superb models. However, it isn't often that poles come along that offer a truly innovative feature. Do the Komperdell FXP4 Cloud Vario Compact poles do that? Here is my detailed review.

### **Who are Komperdell?**

Komperdell may not be so well known to many UK hillgoers, but they are certainly a brand with pedigree. Actually, almost 100 years of pedigree! Komperdell have been producing poles since 1922 and to this day every pole is still assembled in their Austrian factory. They now produce some other items such as snow shoes and back protectors, but poles remain a core element of their business.

## Features

### Materials

The FXP4 Cloud Vario Compact poles are a recent addition to the Komperdell range. They are a fully featured 4 section pole made from full carbon. They have an adjustable top section that secures with Komperdell's Powerlock 3.0 closure. This closure is made of forged aluminium to offer what the company describe as their strongest lock system. The extension range is 105 to 125 cms for this compact model. If you are taller you may want to look to the non-compact version. The folded length for this version is 38 cms. This ensures they will fit comfortably inside a daypack.



### Grips & Tips

The poles are topped by the Trail Pro 245 cork grips with an extended grip zone. This is designed to offer flexible grip options for steep terrain. The strap features ventilation via the

air padding system. It is also woven inside for maximum wearing comfort. At the bottom end there is Komperdell's vario baskets designed to offer a secure fit and simple changeovers. The tip is made from carbide.

### **Self Deployment**

Finally, the poles feature the FXP folding mechanism. This unique self-deploying system flicks the poles into their locked position automatically. The sections then snap together with each length having an individual locking mechanism. This compact version has a stated weight of 199 grams per pole.

## **In Use**

### **Styling**

Let's start with first impressions. Unlike many ultralight poles we have used and tested, for this model Komperdell have used chunky 16 and 18 mm tubing. They look sturdy and strong. The only downside to thicker tubes, of course, is increased bulk. These won't pack down as small as some others on the market and are harder to hold in the hand if you are carrying them in folded position. On the other hand, slightly wider tubing means they are comfortable to hold along the shaft of the pole.

### **Attention To Detail**

The poles come in a subtle black colour with contrasting cork handles. The neat leash is also black. There is nothing particularly showy about these poles, but there doesn't need to be. They are sleek and the styling really works. The build quality also shines through. Everything is beautifully finished and the attention to detail is clear.



### **Extremely Secure**

Next, for this Komperdell FXP4 Cloud Compact Poles review it was time to test the opening mechanism. Komperdell refer to this as the FXP system. Well, all I can say is wow! There is some power in this system. As soon as you let the pole sections free they snap into position quickly and efficiently. In fact, you would want to take a little care that the opening doesn't cause some injury. Once the poles locate in place each section snaps closed with a hidden mechanism. Once locked they certainly feel extremely secure.

The only other key consideration here is that, if you don't secure the poles when not connected, they will leap open. Komperdell offer 2 solutions to this. On each basket there is a slot that the poles can be snapped into. Komperdell also supply a velcro closure strap for each pole. In use I've found the basket slot holds the poles together without a problem. Infact, I've rarely used the strap.

### **The FXP System**

The secret to the FXP system is worth explaining. In most avalanche style poles there is a cord running inside the poles. In the FXP system there is no need for this. The advantage of this is a reduction of parts needed for the folding system. Komperdell say this reduces weight and minimises the risk of the system failing. The other benefit of this is the solid feel of the locked poles. There is no movement or rattling between the pole sections. Infact, you could believe the poles are a single pole section rather than several separate pieces.



### **Hidden Mechanism**

Once locked in the open position, the sections need to be individually released for folding by pressing a discrete integrated button. This is a smooth mechanism. I tried it with medium thickness gloves on and it worked well. I haven't had the chance to see how well the mechanism works in freezing conditions, but imagine it will keep working well as there isn't anything exposed.

The only question might be if moisture gets inside and freezes. I haven't had chance to use them in winter yet and so I had to get creative to test this possibility. I tried soaking the poles and freezing them in the home freezer. I'm pleased to say the mechanism still worked fine. So, hopefully this isn't an issue for winter users.

The adjustable section works perfectly. You slide the pole section to the desired height and lock down the Powerlock closure. It immediately feels secure and dependable. It's also interesting that Komperdell like to use a forged aluminium closure system here. It certainly feels durable and is really smooth to operate. I'm not sure what weight penalty this adds, but they have obviously decided it is worth it. To adjust the tightness of the closure clamp in the field you would need a screwdriver.



### **Comfortable To Hold**

The cork grip works really well. The shaping fits comfortably in the hand and the cork feels comfortable to hold for long periods of time. I always really value the grip extension. I see this as an essential on any trekking pole. When you are crossing slopes it really helps to be able to position your hand further down the pole. This means you don't need to keep re-adjusting the length. It also gives you hand a break by changing the grip position.

The low profile strap is ventilated and lightly yet comfortably padded. It also has a simple and efficient adjustment system. That said, I have to own up that I rarely use the straps on trekking poles. I prefer the flexibility of being able to move my hand position. I also don't like to have my hand held captive if I fall. On the other hand, there are times when I do like to use the straps. This could be if I'm in a position where I can't risk dropping the pole. Also, there are times when I want to take some weight onto my wrists rather than having to grip too hard.

### **Innovative Baskets**

Beyond all that, the other aspects to consider are at the base of the poles. The durable carbide tip is certainly up to tough use. Having said that, we could say the same for many pole designs. The difference I want to mention with these poles is with the baskets. To attach the baskets you just push the baskets onto the poles and twist to lock them into place. It is simple and really efficient. I was a little concerned they might come loose but so far this has never happened and I no longer worry about it. They feel rock solid.



The poles have a stated weight of 199 grams per pole. For this Komperdell FXP4 Cloud Compact Poles review I also stuck them on the office scales. They actually came in at 225 grams per pole which is certainly a difference. Either way, although this weight is certainly lightweight, but still doesn't put them into a very lightweight category. Interestingly, Komperdell say they are 30% lighter, but don't specify what they

are 30% lighter than. Is this another Komperdell pole or other brands? I assumed it means 30% lighter than a comparable pole with traditional Z pole construction?

## **Robust Design**

Even though they aren't the lightest poles out there, they are of very robust design and they will undoubtedly last extremely well. In an outdoor world where we are striving to be as sustainable as possible this is a great thing. Having a set of poles that will last for many adventures has to be better than having poles that will fail and be destroyed after not so many. It is always that trade of weight versus performance versus durability.

## **Summary**

Our Komperdell FXP4 Cloud Compact Poles Review details a durable, lightweight and innovative product from a respected Austrian manufacturer. The self deploying system works really well and is a nice innovation. More importantly as far as I'm concerned, once extended the poles feel extremely solid. Infact, the smooth profile and seamless connections make them feel like a single length of pole. There is nothing to catch or snag on trail obstacles or other equipment. Besides that, all the other features work exactly as you would expect from a top quality pole. The build quality is top notch and the attention to detail really shines through.

At 200 Euros (approximately £170) these are certainly at the upper end of what you would want to pay for a pair of poles. However, they will undoubtedly last extremely well. It is also well worth considering that the poles also benefit from Komperdell's amazing 3 year guarantee. This, states Komperdell, is a 'no questions asked' guarantee. They will repair your poles regardless of what happened to them. This works in every country and operates directly through the manufacturer. Their website has a facility to initiate returns. For items like poles that are very prone to damage this is a great feature.

So, I would say well done Komperdell on a well designed and beautifully manufactured pole. They are a pleasure to use and the guarantee is a reassuring additional benefit. Full details are available on the Komperdell website [here](#).

We usually carry trekking poles inside our rucksack when they aren't in use. We detailed this idea [here](#).

## **Post navigation**