



A set of high-performance EBC disc pads has provided the final ingredient for our R32 brake upgrade

Mellow Yellow

LAST MONTH, we made a further upgrade to the braking system of our Mk 4 GTI 1.8T, installing Tyrolsport's 'calliper stiffening kit' to the R32 callipers. It was always on the cards that we were going to install a set of uprated pads as well, but first we wanted to run it for a few weeks to evaluate the calliper conversion on its own.

There's no doubt that using bronze bushes for the slider pins produces a noticeable improvement, especially under hard prolonged braking, but this also revealed a weakness in the standard-spec Jurid pads, proving rather prone to fade under repeated heavy braking. Down to their last 5 mm or so of friction material, they were due for imminent replacement in any case.

Of course, there is quite a wide range of uprated pads available, but we've previously used EBC's products to good effect and decided to stick with what we know. As well as high-performance slotted and grooved discs, EBC produces a variety of different pads, ranging from road to full-race spec and colour-coded accordingly.

After the standard OEM replacement black 'Ultimax' pad, the basic upgrade is the 'Greenstuff' Roadsport pad, soft enough to retain excellent feel from cold, but more resistant to fade than a standard pad. Next up is the 'Redstuff'

Superstreet pad, which is harder and provides very good fade resistance but offers slightly less feel from cold. We have a set of these pads on our sister magazine's project car, a 1984 Audi quattro turbo, and they work well when really hammered, but feel slightly dead and 'wooden' at low speeds when cold.

For Project GTI, though, which is a dual-purpose fast-road and occasional track-day car, we decided to go with the next step up, the 'Yellowstuff' spec, described as an 'Ultra High Friction Track & Street pad'. Although a full-race material, capable of high temperature use, with very good resistance to wear, this pad still offers excellent bite from cold, making it just as suitable for road use as it is for motorsport applications. EBC claims that 'these are the grippiest and most impressive pads that you will have ever used'. The only higher spec in

the EBC range is a 'Bluestuff' Endurance pad, which is described as 'very hard' and recommended only for long-distance endurance racing.


Installation is exactly the same procedure as the standard pads, described in full detail in our article in the April 2006 issue. The only difference is that, in this case, we attached a one-way valve and loosened the bleed nipple to cope with the displacement of fluid when retracting the pistons. The master cylinder reservoir had been topped-up recently, when replacing a faulty rear calliper, while the front pads were low, and if we hadn't drained off this excess the fluid reservoir would have overflowed when the pistons were pushed back to their fully retracted position.

EBC recommends bedding-in new pads over the first 300-400 miles of use by 'braking lightly and intermittently to achieve a matching between the pad and rotor'. We achieve this by completing a regular 60-mile motorway journey, turning off at every junction en route, braking firmly but not harshly on the off-ramp down to the roundabout below before re-joining again on the other side. The EBC pads come with a mildly abrasive red-coloured coating on the friction surface which is designed to help clean the brake disc of any existing deposits, and they are chamfered to help prevent braking noises.

'EBC PRODUCES A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT PADS, RANGING FROM ROAD TO FULL-RACE SPEC AND COLOUR-CODED ACCORDINGLY'



After nearly a thousand miles use in the couple of weeks since fitting they are now performing very smoothly and strongly. Application from cold or at low speed is indiscernible from the standard pads and yet the EBC yellows really dig in and bite hard under heavy braking, with not a hint of fade, even during repeated applications from high speed. We've yet to put them through the rigours of a full track day, but we've absolutely no reservations at all about their performance for fast road use.

Priced at around £90-£100 for the set of front pads, they're quite reasonably priced, too, when you consider that even budget-priced OEM replacement pads from the major independent parts suppliers will cost £60-£70, and a set of standard pads for the R32 from a VW retailer list for £148.34 +VAT 

'ALTHOUGH A FULL-RACE MATERIAL, CAPABLE OF HIGH TEMPERATURE USE, WITH VERY GOOD RESISTANCE TO WEAR, THIS PAD STILL OFFERS EXCELLENT BITE FROM COLD...'

PREVIOUS REFERENCES

R32 brake conversion (GTI 1.8T)
Aug 2005 p48-49

R32 disc pad replacement
Apr 2006 p47-49

Tyrolsport (R32) calliper upgrade
Nov 2007 p52-53

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