

CYCLOPEDIA *Bike finder*

Which bike should I buy?
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Ian Nicholson

Light, comfy belt-drive hybrid

• **For:** Ian Nicholson, aged 55, from Glasgow. • **Bike needs:** I commute on a 2018 BMC Alpenchallenge 02 ONE. It's ideal for a city where it rains a lot: hub gears, belt drive, hydraulic disc brakes, mudguards. But I'm now finding the riding position uncomfortable as I have back problems. I'd like something similar that's just as light but with a more relaxed, upright riding position. • **Must have:** Hub gears, belt drive, hydraulic disc brakes, mudguard and rack compatibility. A more upright riding position. • **Must not have:** Chain, derailleur, tyres narrower than 38mm. • **Budget:** £2,000.



MATT LAMY

Before I pitch any ideas, a quick managing of expectations. Modern bikes are holistically designed with all areas of their build aimed at a certain outcome. In your Alpenchallenge's case, that's a fast but practical flat-bar road cycle. The spec, weight and riding position are all part of this package, so it will be tricky to find the same ingredients in a more upright bike. (Spoiler alert: in this case, increased weight is probably going to be your key compromise.)

All that said, the **Trek District 4 (£1,675, trekbikes.com)** is a fine starting point. It has a more relaxed riding position, 8-Speed Shimano Alfine hub with Gates CDX belt drive, 40mm tyres, fitted racks and mudguards, and disc brakes. The one downside, as expected, is weight. It's 15.5kg.

Slightly lighter, but only by 100g, is **Cube's Travel Pro (£1,199, cube.eu)**. Overall spec is similar in nature to the Trek, although it features a lower-range Shimano Nexus 8-speed hub.

Perhaps best of the lot, **Canyon** has a whole host of viable models. I wondered if a step-through option, such as the **Commuter 7 mid-step (£1,749, canyon.com)** might help you to achieve improved comfort. Thanks to its very high spec, it weighs in at an easier-to-carry 13kg.

To finish, something of a left-field choice. Although it features drum brakes rather than discs and a chain-driven geared hub rather than belt drive, **Pashley's Parabike (£875, pashley.co.uk)** does provide a more traditional riding position – and looks fab!

CANYON COMMUTER 7 £1,749



DAN JOYCE

As Matt notes, lightweight hybrids – even those with belt drives – will come with the sportier, lower-handlebar riding position that you don't want. There are belt-drive hybrids similar to your BMC, such as the **Cannondale Bad Boy 1 (£2,000, cannondale.com)**, **Cube Editor (£1,799, cube.eu)** and **Cube Hyde Race (£1,199)**. But they'll probably be only slightly more comfortable than your existing bike.

You've said you like everything about your BMC except the riding position. So my recommendation is to keep the bike and just change how you sit on it. A **35° System EX stem (£21.99, extrauk.co.uk)** will put the handlebar higher and closer than your BMC's flat stem. That might be enough by itself.

If not, swap the handlebar as well. An **On-One Geoff (£29.99, planetx.co.uk)** or another bar with back-sweep (see p69 for ideas) would enable you to sit much more upright. The gear cable and brake hoses will likely be too short for the new bar/stem combination, so you'll need to replace those.

If you're desperate to scratch that new bike itch and don't mind some extra weight, one option that ticks all your other boxes is the **ARCC Abington Non Electric 8 Speed – Orange (£1,600, arccbikes.com)**. This has a taller head tube, a longer steerer tube and a riser handlebar so it will sit you more upright than your BMC. It comes with 38mm tyres and can be ordered with mudguards. While ARCC doesn't quote a weight, it will be heavier than your BMC because it's steel.

SYSTEM EX 35° STEM £21.99



ON-ONE GEOFF HANDLEBAR £29.99

