

While this stand will work fine, having the bicycle mounted so high, makes it more likely to tip over than better stands, and you might find it more wobbly to work on than you like (unless you bolt it down). There's no easy way to raise or lower or rotate the bike, either, so you'll need to move to the part you want to work on rather than moving it to you. Still, as a starter stand or a nice folding one to take to events, it's a reasonable choice, especially for the price.

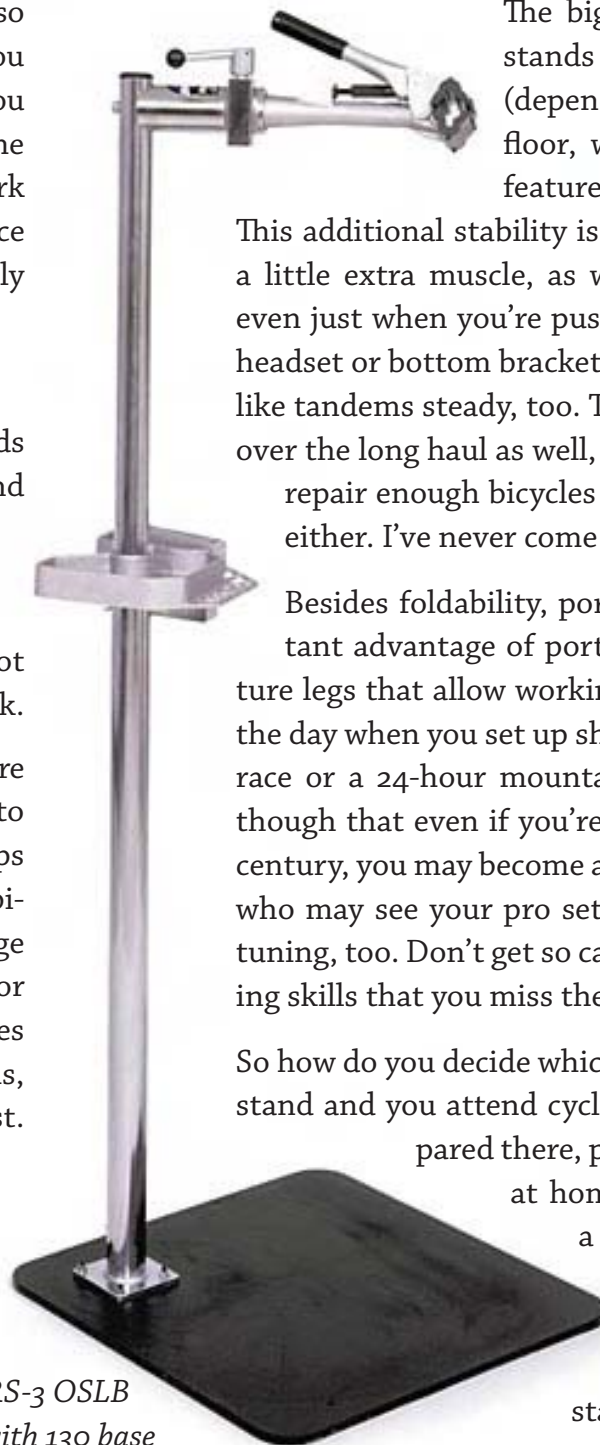
The Best Stands

As I mentioned, one of the biggest advantages pro workstands offer over simpler stands, like the bottom-bracket types and homemade stands, is the ability to rotate your bicycle up to 360 degrees. You won't actually invert your bike very often, but it's good to be able to rotate it however you need it to move things to you. You'll do this on every repair at least a little, and not having to bend over or reach can really save your back and neck.

Pro stands usually offer height adjustability, too, so whether you're tall or small, you can place the bicycle right where it's easiest to work on. You'll also love the high-tech and easy-to-use clamps that hold your machine securely and safely (usually you hold bicycles by the seatpost to avoid any possibility of frame damage that could occur if you clamped your thin metal frame tubes or delicate carbon ones). Holding bikes by the seatpost nicely solves the problem of how to hold models with unusual frame designs, too. And naturally the clamp's jaws are soft to protect your post.

Dedicated or Portable

There are dedicated shop stands; heavy-duty, more-expensive models designed to stay parked in your shop, and portable models, lighter stands (they can weigh as little as 12 pounds), that fold for easy travel and storage, usually cost less, and also work perfectly well for home use.



Park PRS-3 OSLB stand with 130 base

The biggest advantage of dedicated repair stands is additional stability. This is because (depending on the design) they bolt to the floor, wall or workbench, or because they feature heavy construction or hefty bases.

This additional stability is helpful when you're required to use a little extra muscle, as when breaking free frozen parts, or even just when you're pushing and pulling to feel for play in a headset or bottom bracket. It helps for holding heavier bicycles like tandems steady, too. These stands tend to be more durable over the long haul as well, though it's highly unlikely you could repair enough bicycles to wear out a quality portable stand either. I've never come close.

Besides foldability, portability and affordability, an important advantage of portable stands is that they usually feature legs that allow working on all surfaces, which really saves the day when you set up shop in the dirt or grass at a cyclocross race or a 24-hour mountain-bike competition. Keep in mind though that even if you're only tuning your own bike before a century, you may become an instant celebrity with other riders, who may see your pro setup and ask your help for their fine-tuning, too. Don't get so carried away showing off your wrenching skills that you miss the start of your ride!

So how do you decide which type to get? If you can only get one stand and you attend cycling events and would like to be prepared there, purchase a portable model. If you ride at home most of the time and don't need a traveling stand you'll be fine with a dedicated workstand. Or if you can afford it you could just get both, like me, and have the ideal stand for every situation.