

## Folding Bicycles | Commute Kings

These collapsible rides have more heft than a Razor scooter — and are worth all the attention you'll get when you lug one onto the bus. We endured weeks of unsolicited remarks from strangers to see which models really help commuters get around with speed, if not with style.

— Steven Leckart



### Dahon Mu SL

The nine-speed Mu SL is no substitute for a high-end road bike, but its slight weight (19 pounds) and fast folding time (15 seconds) make it ideal for the urban commuter. Thankfully, the streamlined Mu SL also boasts enough name-brand components that it won't look like you're training for the Tour de Noob.

**Wired** Pedals remove easily, so you can swiftly swap in ones with toe clips. The thick aluminum frame and the 20-inch wheels with Rolf Paired spokes give it the appearance of a high tech BMX ride.

**Tired** Toe clips not included. Stiff foam grips. No shocks, so you'll feel every bump (and the optional third-party Thudbuster suspension seat post costs \$150).

\$1,000,  
[www.dahon.com](http://www.dahon.com)



### Brompton M6L

Though the handlebar design is 30 years old, the M6L is one of the most compact quick-folders available today. It transforms into a tidy 10 x 23 x 22-inch package in about 25 seconds. At 24 pounds, this bike isn't fun to carry, but a pair of 2-inch casters allow you to roll it. **Wired** Massive front mudguard shields trousers. Optional titanium folding pedals shave 4 inches off the profile (and add \$18 to the price). Comes in more than a dozen colors — even "flamingo."

**Tired** Proprietary drivetrain includes a mostly plastic, cheap-looking derailleur. Hinged rear triangle doesn't lock in place. \$976,

[www.bromptonbicycle.co.uk](http://www.bromptonbicycle.co.uk)



### Birdy Silver

Looks aren't always deceiving: The strange aesthetics made this bike the most complex and frustrating folder we tested. But the goofy front-fork suspension system on this pricey nine-speed delivers a decidedly unbumpy ride.

**Wired** Front and rear elastomers can be switched out for softer or stiffer suspension (\$15 each). No-hinge design means a stronger, more durable frame. Shimano V-brakes are precise and powerful.

**Tired** We tossed the folded bike into the trunk of a cab and, while stowed, the chain dislodged from the gears and wedged itself between the frame and chainwheel, requiring a screwdriver (and a lot of cursing) to fix.

\$1,250,  
[www.birdybike.com](http://www.birdybike.com)



### Breezer Zag8

We're not opposed to getting a little workout (we love playing sports on Nintendo Wii), but hauling this 25-pound Breezer up a flight of stairs left us downright winded.

**Wired** SKS fenders and flaps let riders take puddles with less splatter. Folding pedals allow for a more compact package. SRAM 3.0 grip shifters and SRAM derailleur provide buttery-smooth gear switching. Fat tires are great for popping curves.

**Tired** Handlebars needed to be readjusted every time we unfolded the bike. Bulky frame and geriatric aesthetics (including old-fogey kickstand) make us feel like we should be wearing orthopedic shoes and Depends, not spandex and clip-ins.

\$559,  
[www.breezerbikes.com](http://www.breezerbikes.com)

