

Vested interest... Easyrig for the girls

Easyrig, the invention of Swedish cameraman **Johan Hellsten**, has been going from strength to strength in recent years, with increasing use not only in its traditional areas of news, documentary and sport, but also becoming an ever more common sight on the sets and locations of top-end dramas. These days it is mentioned frequently as a favourite piece of kit by many of the DoPs we interview for Zerb. Always ready to respond to user feedback and react accordingly, GTC sponsors Easyrig have recently developed a new version of the vest designed especially for female camera operators.

Over the years since the launch of the very first Easyrig in 1994, through listening to users' requirements, as well as responding to developments in camera technology, the arrival of new camera models and formats, and trends for different shooting styles, Johan and his team have continually expanded the Easyrig range. The full collection of available systems now offers a wide variety of ever more specialised and customisable options to suit every shooting situation, including: a Mini version for lightweight cameras, with a Strong option for heavier cameras in that field; the Easyrig 2.5, catering for cameras weighing up to 16kg (55lb); the Cinema 3 for heavier, fully kitted-out top-end production cameras; the Vario 5, which covers all options by offering adjustments to support a wide range of weights; a different vest specifically designed for gimbal rigs, which typically throw the weight further forward therefore requiring a different way of distributing the weight; and a shoulder mount for DSLR and compact video cameras.

For the girls

The latest example of responding to user demand is the Easyrig Cinema Flex Vest, a version of the vest designed to fit female camera operators more comfortably with adjustments to fit all shapes and sizes incorporated in the design. Having identified this need, Johan set his daughter Rebecca, who has been involved in the company for some years, the challenge of coming up with a design that would work better for female operators. The new vest supports all the different Easyrig bars but differs from the original vest by having more of a 'bra-type' top, which is deeper across the front and very adjustable.

Adopting their usual thorough approach, having developed a beta version of the new vest, Easyrig then asked various female operators in both Europe and the USA to try it out with a range of different cameras and Easyrig support bars.



Fully adjustable 'bra-style' vest, the Easyrig Cinema Flex Vest

Below are some extracts from the assessments received. The feedback included comments about the quality, comfort and feel of the fabric; ease and range of adjustments for both the vest top (to accommodate different chest shapes and sizes) and the rod (to allow for different heights of the women), with some feedback suggesting that adjustment points could be easier to reach; and the effect on the health and comfort of the back and hips.

Beware of counterfeits

As with many products on the market these days, sadly Easyrig are aware of fake copies being around. Before investing in or even hiring an Easyrig, please always check its provenance to make sure you will be getting the proper, high-quality product. A genuine Easyrig will be labelled 'Made in Sweden'. To be sure of the real thing, please always deal direct with Easyrig or an authorised dealer.

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I use RED and ALEXA cameras, and shoot a lot of sport, where I'm chasing athletes and can literally run for hours. I love the vest and the hip padding. The Velcro is a great adjustment. This is my favorite Easyrig.

Diana Rackow, DoP



Diana Rackow trying out the Cinema Flex with GimbalRig 400

The design of the Cinema Flex is lightweight and professionally attractive. It fits very comfortably, with the lower lumbar support to the cinch straps over the chest allowing the load of the camera/gimbal to be mounted with ease, no matter what rig you're using. The design feels solid and allows for smooth motion. I would like the waist strap to sit off the front of the hips, more to help with walking motion though.

The quality of the fabric is durable. You won't have to worry about it unstitching or tearing. Under the shoulder areas where the weight exists can be a bit scratchy – I would like to see a smoother fabric there. Having the chest pocket is a super plus – stick in some batteries, lens cleaner and cards and you're ready to go!

For a DoP who has scoliosis of the vertebra, the Cinema Flex makes long days with a full rig a breeze. With the Cinema Flex Easyrig, my back pain has decreased and I can now focus on the shot rather than the pain.

Blaire Johnson, Camera operator



Blaire Johnson shooting in the Cinema Flex with Easyrig 3 150N

I like the new Cinema Flex Vest. It offers 'extraordinary support' around the chest with the load on the shoulders and back much more balanced.

The quality of the fabric feels very nice. The only thing is it's quite thick, so can get warm. Also, I am quite narrow (170cm, 50kg), which means I have to have it on the tightest and it's still a bit loose. Even so, there is a huge difference with this vest in how I feel on a long job compared to those I've had before, which were much too large.

Ramaa Mosley, DoP



Ramaa Mosley shooting with a RED camera on the Easyrig 3 400N with Cinema Flex Vest

The new rig is great. We adjusted the Velcro and it fits like a glove. I love how well balanced it is. The new vest helps me hold more weight and I no longer have bruising on my hipbones.

I use RED and ALEXA cameras, and shoot a lot of sport, where I'm chasing athletes and can literally run for hours. I love the vest and the hip padding. The Velcro is a great adjustment. This is my favorite Easyrig.

My notes would be: 1) In a perfect world the top rod would extend out another 4in and this could be adjustable; 2) it would be good if the rod could rise up a few inches higher as I'm a tall woman; 3) my assistant and I were wondering if there's a better way to adjust the tension on the rod. Otherwise it's excellent. I've used this new Easyrig five times now and I'm IN LOVE!

Tamara Jones, DoP



Tamara Jones wearing the Cinema Flex with Vario 5 support bar

The torso is a bit too long. I have everything at it's smallest configuration and I would like to shorten it some more.

The bra concept is a bit odd. Although it is comfortable it pushes my breasts up and out. I like that the chest material is wide and it provides more support for sure – actually I think men would like this as well. I just don't like that it pushes the breasts up. In this industry it is predominantly men, so I like to be discreet when I can.

With the 5-inch extension arm, the eyepiece doesn't line up with my eye and the shoulder rest so I have to extend my neck (not by much). In other words the line could be an inch back, closer to the body. The regular arm is fine.

With all this and other useful feedback gathered in, the Easyrig team then set about making some refinements to the Cinema Flex Vest and the results will be revealed at this year's IBC – you will be able to see this and the full range of products on Stand 12. A59.

Fact File



See more about the full range of products:
<http://easyrig.se>

The approved UK dealer for Easyrig products is GTC sponsor Production Gear. See more:
www.productiongear.co.uk/easyrig-support-system.html