

# JUST ADD DIRT

## Parts Review

### Precision Racing Products Steering Stabilizer/Impact Damper

By David Misek



Here I am with the Precision Guys about to give a serious hit to the handlebar setup.

Steering damper. Steering stabilizer. What is that? Why would anyone want one of those?

If you ride in terrain with rocks and trees at a quick pace, then you've experienced handlebars being whipped out of your hands at least a few times. For the purpose of this product review, consider "damper" and "stabilizer" as interchangeable terms-- because they are products that do just that-- dampen the blow of impacts, and stabilize the steering, to help keep you pointed in your intended direction. Stabilizers can withstand (and protect your hands, wrists, arms, and chest from) very severe impacts. This includes bump steer and handlebar feedback from hitting ruts, trees, rocks, other riders' machines, and any imaginable track and trail junk. The faster you go, the more stuff you are bound to hit.

According to the Precision website: [precision-rp.com](http://precision-rp.com) the stabilizer is intended for the following:

- Anyone who rides hard
- Anyone that needs stability
- Anyone who wants an edge
- Anyone who needs to go to work on Monday

Prior to using steering stabilizers, I managed to break my wrist from bouncing off a tree. Since then, I've gone through several "stick" type stabilizers, and they have



Mounting hardware including billet anodized arm, stainless bushing, o-rings, bolts, and special washers.

helped tremendously.

For casual to moderately aggressive riding, or someone on a tight budget, I fully recommend a

"stick" style damper. However, in my experience there is little more to them than the struts on your hood or hatch. They take the edge off big hits, but quickly fade in hot temperatures, or after repeated hits. They also have consistent resistance from center to sides, and pivot from the steering stem and a solid point on the frame utilizing heim joints, which wear quickly. Overall, I usually get about 1 year out of them before the damper loses useful impact absorption at the center position of the travel.



Precision has very recently added the PRO stabilizer to their lineup. This model uses the same mounting hardware and offers all of the same features as the standard model with the addition of an internal fluid reservoir which helps to regulate the oil temperature, thus offering ultimate fade resistance under harsh conditions.

The Precision stabilizer fills the same need as a stick damper, but the technology is a world apart. Precision isn't just a catchy name for these guys-- it's a good way to describe their parts-- which are manufactured with a high level of precision. Their expertise lies in the aerospace industry and they construct their parts out of top quality materials machined to extremely tight tolerances. The stabilizer has only one internal moving part which is made of heat treated stainless steel and match ground to the sleeve within a tolerance of .0002 inches. The exterior moving linkage joint pivots are stainless steel sealed bushings

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packed with grease. The mounting and main "puck" part of the stabilizer is made from billet aluminum, and is anodized for further durability. Each mounting kit is designed to be mounted at the proper angle to prevent side loading, premature wear, and unwanted resistance.

Installation is simple and straight-forward. I have been running mine for about one year. I'm a weekend warrior trail rider and occasional B class cross-country racer. I never notice any "fade" with the Precision stabilizer like I did with the PEP and Denton brand stick stabilizers I used to count on. I have found that with the Precision damper, adjustments are needed for extreme temperature swings, and different riding conditions. While riding in the snow, I soften the adjustments. The cold temperatures slow the oil flow, and the snow itself tends to help take out some of the handlebar feedback that a stabilizer normally protects me from.



Mounting is tucked well out of harm's way on my TRX250R. Model specific mounting hardware is available for most quads.

In high speed situations with high temperatures, I adjust the Precision stabilizer to firmer settings, particularly in the center of the handlebar motion range. Unfortunately, there is no way to adjust the settings while riding. Within minutes in the same terrain there are times I'd like to tighten it up to allow me to loosely hold the bars, then adjust it softer for sections with lots of tight turns

The Precision Damper has 2 adjustments. They both alter the firmness of the stabilizer. One adjustment is for the center (going straight), the other is for the sides (corners). The adjustment range goes from almost zero resistance to levels that would challenge even the Incredible Hulk in making a quick sharp turn. Some other rotary stabilizers on the market advertise technology that helps the rider "return to center." These other stabilizers are designed for motorcycles. Unlike quads, bikes turn by leaning, and it is important to get the front tire straight again right away. Precision

stabilizers are specifically designed for ATV's and are intended to help you hold your line, whether it's a turn or down a straightaway. It is also noteworthy that the other brands of puck shaped stabilizers utilize internal seals and shims which require periodic maintenance. The o-ring seal at the top of the puck is the only vulnerable area on the Precision. Keep away from that o-ring with your pressure washer, and years of consistent usage are possible with no servicing. For the ultimate in consistency and fade resistance, Precision has released their new Pro version, which has an internal reservoir to increase the oil capacity much like piggyback reservoir shock absorbers.

The big question-- Is the Precision Stabilizer worth the money? --unfortunately I can't tell you that. I can only leave the following list of compliments and complaints. For me, my riding style, and environment in which I ride, it is very worthwhile. However, if you are racing cross country against me, then I hope you are not running any stabilizer at all-- I like winning ;-)

<b>Dirt Worthy</b>			<b>85</b>
	<b>Compliments:</b>	<b>Complaints:</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Fitment / Installation:</b>	Straight forward		9/10
<b>Performance:</b>	Extremely adjustable dampening range, separately adjustable for straight and for cornering.	Settings are not adjustable while riding, foolproof or set-and-forget.	43/50
<b>Durability:</b>	Has held up to a year of racing and other abuse proving to be water, weather and vibration resistant.	External linkage is worn slightly, and will soon need to be replaced at a cost of \$38.	18/20
<b>Price:</b>	\$485 Standard; \$559 Pro	On the expensive side.	15/20
Available through <a href="http://precision-rp.com">precision-rp.com</a>			