

AHEAD ARMOR COMPACT HARDWARE BAG



£114 Finding things are getting a bit heavy? Ahead is taking a stand against back-breaking load-ins

WORDS: **STUART WILLIAMS**

There's a feeling that's been spreading throughout the drum community for some time: loading and unloading your gear is officially the worst part of the night.

In recent times, more and more drum companies have been putting out smaller, more portable kits to meet the demands of modern jobbing drummers. Hardware brands such as DW, Tama, Ludwig and Pearl have all followed suit by reverting to lightweight stands harking back to yesteryear, visually, but with the greater adjustment and stability we've come to expect from modern gear. In short, many of us drummers are looking for ways to lighten our load.

As the frequent 2am dash from the car to the front door will attest, however, there's one main culprit in our set-ups that creates the bottleneck. The elephant in the hatchback, if you will: the hardware bag. Commonly, these coffins are big enough to house all of our stands, along with pedals, clamps and a stool too. Although putting all of your metal in one hulking, great big casket means fewer trips, it's almost always a back breaker. Ahead's latest Armor hardware bag aims to fix this, simply by being smaller.

Build

The bag features Ahead's DX-Core system - two layers of padding to help maintain rigidity and absorb shock (keeping your gear protected inside), wrapped in a double-stitched, 600-denier polyester outer as well as using a Sherpa fleece lining inside to help cushion everything. Measuring 32" in length, it cuts down the 'standard' wheeled hardware bag size by a few inches, but this means that you can comfortably get it in the smallest of boot spaces, without having to fold your stands up completely every time.

Hands On

In practice, the Armor Compact Hardware bag is ideally suited to smaller, lightweight stands,

SIZE

Being compact, this is a great solution for light-load gigs where you need a smaller set-up



PORTABILITY

Using two smaller bags could replace your main hardware bag and make loading of bigger hardware collections more manageable

however, we were able to fit our medium/heavy duty hi-hat stand, two boom stands, snare stand and a bass drum pedal in without feeling too cramped. Plus the front pocket allows some extra space for clamps and spares.

If, (like us) you find yourself regularly cursing the sheer weight of your hardware, two smaller bags like the Compact are far easier to manage than one heavier one. And with a street price of around £99, that's not an unreachable solution either. **R**

Essential spec



TYPE

Compact hardware bag

DIMENSIONS

32"x10"x8"
(813x254x203mm)

MATERIAL

Polyester outer, double-layered foam, Sherpa fleece lining

CONTACT

BR Distribution
01207 282806
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www.aheadarmorcases.com

VERDICT: Smaller hardware bags aren't a new thing, but Ahead's Armor series doesn't confuse 'compact' with 'cheap'. It's well made and feels like it'll last. It might even make you enjoy loading your gear!

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★

PLAYABILITY ★★★★★

VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★

RHYTHM RATING ★★★★★