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A headlight that can do it all is harder to find than you might think. There are a lot of factors that go into such a small, useful device: brightness, relative lightness, a simple button mechanism, easy to open, multiple lighting modes, water resistance, a comfortable headband, and good battery life. This list continues because the one device that provides light in the backcountry is an essential and an emergency beacon. The search for the perfect headlight will always depend on the user's taste, but the new Black Diamond ReVolt comes up close. It has a positive pile of the above qualities, with two major advantages: it is a waterproof and rechargeable headlight. With an IPX8 rating, you can immerse ReVolt in water and it will still work. And it's USB rechargeable, but can still use standard AAA batteries if it's easier for you. Yes, there is a solid waterproof rechargeable headlight. For these reasons we have named Black Diamond ReVolt our Premium Pick for Wilderness Backpacker and Car Camper. There are more expensive headlights out there, but we believe that spending more than \$60 on a headlight is unnecessary, especially when there are such quality lamps at this price or less. We find ReVolt to work excellent for Wilderness Backpackers who aren't too concerned with weight, and want a powerful, nifty headlight that would pair well with a solar charger or battery bank. It's also perfect Car Camper because you can charge it in the car or at the camp without a thought, and put it in a pocket for late excursions. Read below to see the full review of the Black Diamond ReVolt headlight, and check out our comprehensive guide to headlights if you're keen to know more about this particularly illuminating subject. Comfort Durability Brightness Battery Life Summary Our star rating system highlights the main features for headlights and judges them based on our experience. We reviewed Black Diamond ReVolt in 2017. It hasn't had a major change since then and we still think it's a great headlight. Black Diamond ReVolt Specifications Feature Type Feature Feature Specs What this means Weight 3.1 oz (89 g) A very standard weight for a headlight. It's with the batteries inside. Max Lumen (Light Output)* 300 for Alkaline 175 for NiMH The technical maximum output is 300 lumen, but only if you use normal alkaline batteries. ReVolt is intended for use with the included NiMH batteries, which are 175 lumens at full power. More on this in our guide. Max Beam Distance* High: 262.4 feet (80 M) Low: 32nd ft. (10 M) These distances are for Alkaline batteries, so remember that if you use the included NiMH batteries, the distance will not be that far. That said, on NiMH batteries max distance is still far from basic trail finding at night. More on this in our guide. Max battery life* High: 25 hours low: hours Again, all times are based on alkaline batteries. They are correct, but the NiMH batteries do not last nearly as long. The battery always lasted long enough, and being able to recharge on site compensates for lost time. More on this in our guide. Beam Type(s) Spot, Flood ReVolt has a spot beam for focused, distant light and a flood beam to close up. You can use them separately or together. Very nice beams. More about Beam Types in our guide. Modes Low, Medium, High, Strobe, Dimmable The ReVolt pretty much like it all. You can dim any bulb to full brightness or just a few lumens for complete adaptation to your environment. The white and red states have a strobe as well. Red or green light? Red light The red light on the rebellion works well and is quite bright at full force. Dim it for tent use. Water resistance IPX8 An industry-high ipx8 is one of the most water-repellent headlights on the market. You can dunk the headlight in up to three meters of water, no problem. More on water resistance and ratings in our guide. Tilt Yes Easy one-handed to specifically locked angles. Lock mode? Yes In off-position, hold the main button (the only button) until you see a small blue-gray light flash. It's locked. Battery type 3 AAA You can use the included Black Diamond-specific NiMH AAA batteries, other AAA NiMH batteries, or regular AAA alkaline batteries. Only the included Black Diamond NiMH ones can be charged with the headlight, though. Headband Type 2 band A nice elastic headband with two-point adjustment capability. A little loose at times, but easily adjustable. Manufacturer warranty limited warranty Black Diamond provides a three year warranty for its headlights. That's less time than some other major manufacturers, but still pretty decent for an electronic device. Retail price \$59.95 The higher end of what we think someone should pay for a headlight. You get a lot of features in ReVolt at this price. * Studies show that the manufacturer claims on Max Lumens, Beam Distance, and Battery Life are bloated compared to traditional ANSI standards. Our listed specifications are those of the manufacturer, which are typically correct for the first 2-10 minutes of headlight use with a full charge. While this is unfortunate, it is currently industry standard, which means that most headlights suffer from these inflated specs and washing across the board. Gear Review of the Black Diamond ReVolt Origins: Easing You In When looking at Black Diamond ReVolt, it's important to know that the previous version, which debuted in 2015, shook the industry. Headlights with rechargeable technology have been around for a while, but none of them had long enough battery life or bright enough beams to be viable against the alkaline versions. Black Diamond changed it with ReVolt, and the 2017 model takes it up another notch. The Black Diamond 2017 Sexy, right? I tested Black Diamond ReVolt for three months. I took the car camping on the coast of California and in the Los Padres National Forest. I took it on night walks with heavy rain. I took it to Thailand for some light spelunking, and it has traveled with me into the backcountry of the Sespe Wilderness. When it comes to a headlight, the main feature for me is that it just works. Kind of like Apple products, but without all the over-the-top marketing videos. A headlight could be uber powerful and lighter than air, but if it's complicated or hard to use, I get frustrated pretty quickly. Simple headlight? Happy backpacker. In almost every use case Black Diamond ReVolt exceeded my expectations and is easily my go-to headlight for backpacking and camping. Revelation: The Moment I Knew The numerable shiny qualities of the new Black Diamond ReVolt were whittled down to two extremely useful, and revealing use cases. The whole waterproof rechargeable headlight thing is as accurate as it sounds, despite it sounding too good to be true. The moment was on a sunset hike that turned into a night hike in the rain. I was breaking into new trail running shoes and enjoying the rare humid season on a track in Ojai. I went out further than necessary, knowing the real point of this was to see the night-hike quality of Black Diamond ReVolt. I was also prepared for rain as it had poured on and off for a few days but didn't really expect it. The sun was already down when I decided to turn around; the ground was slushy and I had to tread carefully to avoid a full mouth-soaking. Dusk turned into the murky, almost dark hour, and rain clouds settled over their heads. It started to sprinkle, then rain. I put ReVolt on my head, strapped it under the Arc'teryx Zeta LT hood with quick adjustment of the headband, clicked on it on, and started to pick up my pace. The main light is bright enough to see at dusk. With a single tap revolt powers on the Spot LED, which is not its full brightness, but pretty bright when fully charged. Complete darkness hadn't settled down yet, but it was enough bouncing light to show me the way. ReVolt is not the smoothest ride while trail running, but on a quick walk it's plenty pleasant. I made my way down the track as the rain rose and darkness descended. I used the PowerTap press on the side of ReVolt, which switches to and from lighter setting, which in this case were both Spot and Flood beams. This provides a wide, even light at the front and a long light together, the perfect combination for trail hiking at night in the rain. I could see the ground in front of me or the hillside above. The little sun icon is PowerTap. Just press your finger against it to change a lighter setting. It's not even really a button, so it takes a little getting used to, but when you do Easy. As I approached the end of the race, thoroughly soaked, I turned off the headlight. It was almost dark. I couldn't see the track in front of me, or much of anything, except for a few headlights or shelters in the distance. So I turned it on again: easy walks and lots of light. The ReVolt had no problems with the rain at this race either. It is rated IPX8 and can handle a full canister of up to three meters in water. I tested this on many occasions and it always stopped. A headlight that can withstand any rain, or a drop in water, is worth its weight in gold. IPX8 means that Black Diamond ReVolt can can dunk without any problems. Here it is during some controlled tests. I could tell at the end of my night hike that the max brightness setting was starting to dim. But I had rationed the light and my time, and made it to the car with lots of light left. The most satisfying part of Black Diamond ReVolt? After carefully putting my muddy shoe in the car, turning on window wipers, and getting the music going, I just plugged it in. Dig Deeper The Black Diamond ReVolt has a number of features, all of which work in a simple no-fuss way, which I have come to expect from Black Diamond. There is a click button that turns on the light, switches it between Spot, Flood, and Red modes, and allows you to dim. After getting the hang of how long you have to hold the button to get the red mode, or the red Strobe mode, it's a snap to switch back and forth. The damping is my favorite part, though. You can even dim the red light for reading in the tent! Clutch. Red light! Damping! Wool! I suck at opening things - bags of chips, overly sealed salami, even ziplock bags. Headlight battery cases are notoriously difficult to open, and the previous line of Black Diamond headlights (ReVolt included) was not very easy to open. I typically had to take a knife to them and always felt that something was about to crack. Black Diamond changed this closure on the new models (both ReVolt and Spot have those that make other models) and it's much easier. You just have to pull the side and the whole back swings open. Smooth and easy. A new battery access door makes it easier than ever to open ReVolt.. I also love the battery lock feature. You hold down the main button for four seconds until it hits a light blue light — you've locked it. It can't be turned on accidentally. This is seriously a godsend and should be on every headlight. There's also a battery indicator that's much harder to notice, but it's useful. There is a very small light that is either green, orange or red, depending on the battery life. This turns on for about five seconds when you change mode or turn on ReVolt. I didn't put to it for a really long time, because the other on the headlight, overpower this less light, so be aware if you want to check the battery life. It shows two things. First, the battery indicator. Do you see the faint green light under the main bulb? This means it is fully charged and charging. The second: This is how easy it is to charge ReVolt. It also comes with the micro-USB cable. The headband has two moving adjustment points, which is another change from the previous Black Diamond line, which had a single fixed and an adjustment point. While I like the look and feel of the headband material much more, the new system makes the headlight more likely to loosen over time. I found myself overtightening to be sure it would be set. That said, I can adjust the length quickly and it's really comfortable. If Black Diamond wanted to woo customers, they would include the extra comfy pad of fabric that is on storm (another headlight of theirs) with ReVolt. This provides extra protection where it rests against your forehead - but alas, revolt (and Spot) doesn't have it. The headband is long, fairly comfortable, and has two sliding adjustment points. You can also see the single, tactile button on top of ReVolt. Then there are the batteries. ReVolt comes with three rechargeable AAA batteries. The batteries are made of Black Diamond, says ReVolt on them, and are specially designed to be used with this headlight. They work well and caused no problems recharging over long periods of time. ReVolt with the included Black Diamond NiMH batteries. Also works with other AAAs. ReVolt can also use regular AAA alkaline batteries, which is why it's such an awesome piece of gear (and our Premium Pick). Most other rechargeable headlights are not compatible with real batteries that can be purchased in a store, so if you're out of charge, you're out of luck. Comfort Like strapping on a new pair of braces, black diamond revolt was pretty comfortable out of the box, but every time I spent that extra minute to ring in the perfect fit I was better off. I used it to read late into the night on camping trips, and had no problem with headaches. Durability Over three months, several tours and international travel shows Black Diamond ReVolt not a scratch. I tend to be careful with my gear, and tried hard to keep it from hitting stone or concrete. The plastic housing seems durable and I cannot imagine that it will be damaged during normal use. Brightness The black diamond ReVolt is light. It clocks in at 300 lumens with alkaline batteries which are really, really bright. But most people (myself included) will use the included NiMH rechargeable AAAs, which is 175 lumens at max brightness. This was plenty for a night hike in the rain, although I would never call it overwhelmingly bright. Remember that decreases as battery life decreases, so max. relative to the battery life. Battery life Ah, battery life. While the battery life of ReVolt is excellent when all things are taken into account, it's a shame it's no longer. With the Alkaline batteries, you get a really, really long battery life. As long as I got tired of testing it and didn't want to waste a whole day with the lights on. With NiMH rechargeable batteries, battery life is decent but not great. I've never had trouble with it going out, but I noticed that the brightness a little after a few hours of intermittent use. The point of a headlight like this is to recharge seamlessly, whether it's in the field via a battery pack or in the car between trips. Because of this, ReVolt was almost always topped up when I had to use it and only had serious battery drains when I was actively testing this feature. Battery life is less of a problem when you can simply charge your headlight. Style The new line of Black Diamond headlights looks sleek. They bring some cool combinations to a rather dull and cave-dwelling unit. More head shots of me and the headlight. Stylish enough, especially in The North Face Thermoball Hoodie. Complaints As much as I love the new rendition of Black Diamond ReVolt, there are still a few things that annoy me. First, Black Diamond states that the light has programmable memory that will remember what setting your headlight was on, and turn to the same thing. I didn't find this feature to be very clear, so if it's there, I haven't found an easy way to use it. I don't necessarily mind this – the dimming feature makes getting the correct brightness a cinch – but why advertise a feature that's really hard to find and use? All these official Tech Specs from Black Diamond are for alkaline batteries, especially Lumens, Distance, and Burn Time. But NiMH batteries will be most common because they are rechargeable. Second, the alleged lumen. This is a problem with most manufacturers of headlights - they put a very high lumen number on the package, and the headlight actually works on the brightness for a short period of time. I actually think that ReVolt does a great job of maintaining high brightness, but what disturbs me is that all their materials tout lumen (and battery life) for alkaline batteries. It has 300 sultry and 25 hours of life... using Alkaline batteries. However, this is a rechargeable headlight intended to be used with the included NiMH batteries. These work at a much lower number of lumens and shorter battery life. The NiMH numbers are written on the box under the Alkaline numbers, but for most unsuspecting customers it feels like inaccurate information because most people want to buy this headlight specifically for the rechargeable qualities that only work with NiMH batteries. Black Diamond wanted to be more up front, they wanted to NiMH max lumen count and battery life as the most important, with alkaline use under it. Last word underwater? Out for weeks? Looking for a small upgrade but don't want to reinvent the wheel? Black Diamond ReVolt is a waterproof rechargeable headlight that makes many features feel simple while providing more than enough light. Where to buy Black Diamond ReVolt The Black Diamond ReVolt tested in this review is the latest version. It's a great update to the very popular 2015 version. This version has a slimmer housing, an IPX8 rating, a max of 300 lumen, a redesigned opening mechanism, and is styled differently. All in all, it's a much better headlight, and you should make sure you grab the new one. Look for 300 lumen to make sure you've landed on the new headlight. Compare Black Diamond ReVolt prices below. Review Policy: We do not accept payments or gifts from brands and suppliers and strive to provide objective, independent advice. Brands typically provide review samples that we return, and in some cases we buy the item so we can continue to use it long after the review. 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