

CYCLOPEDIA

Bike finder

Which bike should I buy?
Ask us at cyclinguk.org/bikefinder



Victoria Lloyd-Gent

Lightweight step-through hybrid

- **For:** Victoria Lloyd-Gent, age 49, from Durham. • **Bike needs:** Commuting to work, including nursery drop-off (child seat). Trips to local shops, etc. Recreational riding, occasionally using a bike trailer. Holidays/cycle touring.
- **Must haves:** Step-through frame. Robust. Lightweight. Pannier rack. Space to attach child seat. Space to fix front panniers/basket if rear rack used for child seat. • **Budget:** £1,000.



Matt Lamy

Because you mentioned you're planning to load the bike up with a bit of kit – and other more precious cargo – I've decided to prioritise two of your requirements: rack mounts and braking performance. There are plenty of step-through

frames out there, but relatively few of them have both front rack mounts and disc brakes.

In terms of global brands, the Trek website is the best place to start. If you want to use almost all your budget, there is the **Dual Sport 2 Equipped Stagger Gen 5 (£925, trekbikes.com)** with rear rack included, front rack mounting points, Tektro hydraulic disc brakes and a mid-range Shimano 2x9 groupset.

This bike certainly looks robust but possibly a little too much so for your needs. The **Trek FX 3 Disc Stagger (£975)** is another option that fulfils all the important criteria while being a little lighter and more sporty – and it comes with better Shimano Deore gears and Shimano hydraulic disc brakes, albeit for a £50 upcharge.

Marin also has a couple of interesting options. The **Kentfield ST 2 (£685, marinbikes.com)** is a trendy step-through with a Microshift drivetrain – which is actually not bad at all – and Clarks mechanical discs. Or there's the **Fairfax ST 2 (£665)**, which prioritises quiet competence rather than class looks, and has decent Shimano gears and Tektro hydraulic discs.

Finally, GT has the **Transeo Sport Step-Through (£500, gtbicycles.com)**, with probably the prettiest frame of our shortlist here, an entry-level Shimano Tourney drivetrain and mechanical disc brakes. Despite being only half your budget, it should actually suit your needs rather well.

TREK FX 3 DISC STAGGER £975



Dan Joyce

Most step-through bikes seem to be made for purchasers prioritising price over weight, so they're generally cheap and heavy – albeit robust. The **Kona Coco (£849, konabikeshop.co.uk)** and **Cannondale Treadwell EQ Remixte (£950, cannondale.com)** are two relatively lightweight town bikes that meet most of your requirements. The Cannondale even comes with a front rack.

For not much more, however, the **Cube Travel (£999, cube.eu)** is better equipped for everyday journeys and has a gear range more suited to a trailer, a child seat, and touring. There's a step-through 'trapeze' option, as well as the diamond frame one we tested last issue (see cyclinguk.org/trekking-bikes). Its rear rack is rated for 25kg, which is enough for a child seat. The only downside is that, at over 15kg, it's no lightweight.

If low weight is of paramount importance, I'd suggest the **Islabikes Jimi (£799, islabikes.co.uk)**, which tips the scales at 9.9kg. Swap the knobby tyres for a pair of 50-622 or 55-622 **Schwalbe Big Apples (from £26.99)**. Add some **SKS Bluemels Style 28" 65 mudguards (£55)**, a rear rack that's capable of supporting a child seat, such as **Blackburn's EX-1 (£55)**, and a front basket – **Topeak's Front Basket for E-bikes (£43)** is a quick-release one that will carry up to 5kg. You could carry additional luggage in cargo cages fitted to the Jimi's fork.

The Jimi comes with a 26t chainring and an 11-40t cassette, giving a 19-67in range. That low bottom gear will come in handy for hauling loads – or a toddler. Top gear is also low but that might not be a problem for the riding you describe. If it is, swap (or get your local shop to swap) the 26t chainring for a 32t.

ISLABIKES JIMI £799

