

## **Gear Review - Kold Kutter Stud Replacements—Shaun**

*Disclaimer: As usual, I bought the below with my own money and have no affiliation – nobody appears to be lining up to give me free gear!*

In another attempt to reduce my outlay on fly gear (and by reduce, I really mean redirecting funds to other fly gear), I started looking at options for a set of boot studs for my new boots. I'd had cheap studs before – my first set of boots came with a set of self tappers that looked identical to those on the shelf at Bunnings. They worked, mostly. Unfortunately, mostly was not confidence inspiring, and I never really felt comfortable with them.

So perhaps I did need to shell out for the good stuff. The regular boot studs made by my boot manufacturer were 60 dollars for a set of twenty, and again looked like a set of self tappers. The same company offered some really flash looking cleats, with aluminium or carbide bases, that looked like they'd provide all of the traction. A packet was 60 dollars, and I thought 'fair enough' but then noticed that a pack was only ten, so I'd be forking out 120 dollars for a full set, and I'd probably need an extra packet for spares. In relation to the price of a pair of boots, it seemed like quite a bit extra given few of us fish with bare soles.

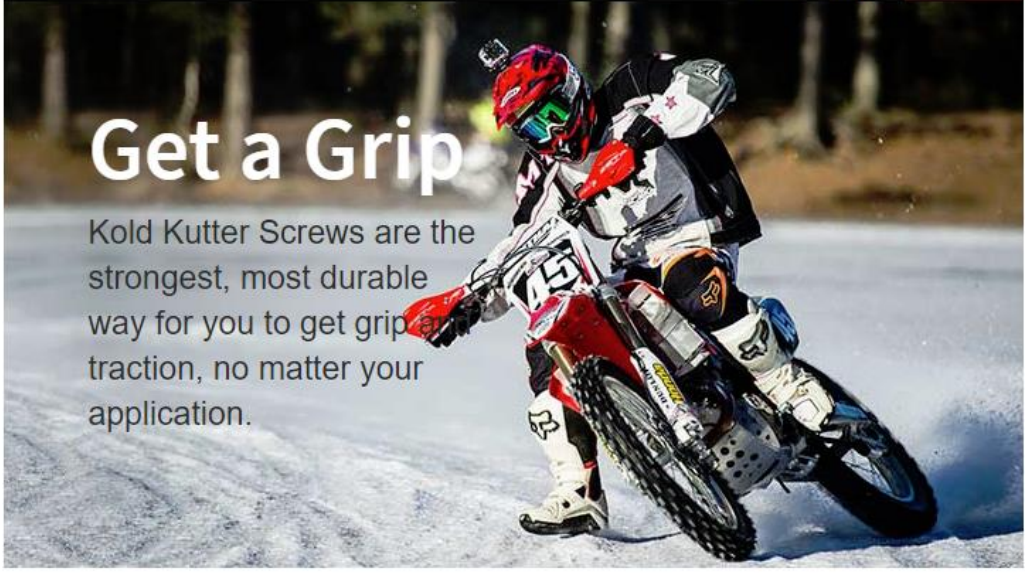
So I started looking for alternatives. The nice folks at HatchMag had an old article that talked about ice racing screws. What's an ice racing screw? Well apparently if you like racing motorcycles on ice, rubber and ice aren't very compatible, so you stud your tyres with special screws that are cut quite deep and have sharpened edges. This sounded promising, so I took the plunge and picked up a bag from the US. Even with conversion rates and shipping the total cost was just on 60 dollars for a bag of 250 screws – yes, 250, not 10. I picked the 3/8 inch screws as recommended.

So I grabbed the cordless drill and a hex and started drilling them into the stud holes. Very easy job, they all held nicely and the whole job took less than ten minutes. My boots have recessed stud holes, and with the screws in, they extended past the base of the boot rubber by a few millimetres. I ran my hand across the base of the boot to ensure they still provided grip like this, and drew blood – so I think the answer was probably yes.

They upgraded boots had their first outing on a Guthega trip. They were solid on difficult ground, and held nicely on streambeds. What was more noticeable is that they were excellent rock-hopping on streamside boulders, something I tend to struggle with. I could clearly feel the boots hold fast as I was shifting weight from boulder to boulder. The fact they were recessed also meant I could safely drive the truck with them on moving between sites.

All up - I think they were a good buy, and I now have a couple of hundred spares, so even if I lose a few a season, I'm not running out anytime soon. The sort I bought appear on their website.

<http://koldkutter.com/>



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