# Black Diamond Distance Carbon Z trekking poles

**Review – June 21, 2016**
**Performance Comparison**
If you are considering buying your first pair of trekking poles or if you only had short distances with your poles then you can probably skip this review. If you hike long distances and you had trekking poles before then read on. These poles are very light and weigh just under 10 ounces. I think they are about the lightest poles on the market. The poles also come with a small packing strap that the other set of tips goes into.

**Comfort**
I really enjoy using these poles and their light weight makes them a pleasure to take along for a long trip. When I was going up fairly steep hills I could take my hands out of the straps and slide my hands down the rubberized grip area to get my arms at the correct angle for going up the hill. Other times I just left my hands in the straps and had the poles at a little more of an angle then normal. Going downhill worked out as expected, being able to use the poles normally or put my hands up on top of the poles with my hands in the straps for extra length. I found the lightness a real pleasure when going on level ground and carrying my poles. There's a big contrast between carbon fiber and aluminum poles while you're walking down the trail carrying your poles. I also read some reviews before buying these poles and noticed that other people found them reliable. There's also another version that is somewhat adjustable that weighs 4 ounces more.

I never really felt that my poles were too long or too short as I was able to move my hands along the various portions of the pole to get the pole angle I needed to get up the trail. Overall I like the design of these poles and the way they feel as you swing them along the trail is amazing. The straps are adjustable and they even have a little right and left designation on the straps. I liked using them on opposite hands from the way they were designed with the little tabs on the outside of my body instead of the inside.

I decided to select a pair a little taller than what I would normally use because I think these poles will be most critical going downhill and so I want them to be the best length for going downhill because you can only lean over so far. When you're going uphill you can get your hands out of the straps and slide your hands down the poles to get a lower grab and help you up the hill.

Locking Mechanism and Range of Adjustment
The operation and design of these poles is a little mysterious at first but once you've used them it's pretty simple to put them together. In looking at the design the Locking pin is pre flattened on top so that repeated usages won't create a flat spot and then create looseness in the pole sections. I had some black diamond poles that did not have this feature and after using them for a couple of years they developed a flat spot on top and every time the poles went down in something sticky then I

would here click click with every step. It drove me crazy until I put duct tape on the pole sections to keep them from moving back and forth. Hopefully these poles will never have that problem.

**Weight**
These poles weigh 10.875 ounces compared to some aluminum poles I have that weigh 20.75 ounces.

**Packed Size**
17 inches long by about 3 inches wide, or 7 inches circumference.

**Durability**
One of the things about carbon fiber is it's very stiff and therefore does not bend easily. I had another pair of carbon fiber poles that somehow shattered and I am not sure why. These appear to be very sturdy and I've used them for about 200 miles so far.

I had an issue with my first pair of these poles when I had used them for a year. One of the inserts went up into the pole and the two sections wouldn't lock straight. I got a new set of the same poles and I haven't had any issues.

I have now had these poles for almost 8 years and they are holding up well after being used for hundreds of miles.

**Tips**
The poles come with two sets of tip inserts. One has a rubberized end and one is a carbon steel end. Changing the tips involved either super strong hands or a pair of pliers because where the tips go into the hole there is a scalloped edge so it's very difficult for them to unscrew. When you change tips pay attention to how hard you have to unscrew them and screw the new tips in with equal force. I read a review where someone did not do this and the tip inserts came out on a trip.

**Baskets**
I was surprised that there are not interchangeable baskets but there are interchangeable tips.

**Versatility and Best Applications**
Anything you buy is a series of compromises and with these poles you compromise adjustability for lightweight. This is definitely a utilitarian product with not being adjustable and baskets that are not interchangeable. The premium feature for these is the lightweight carbon fiber. My opinion on these poles is that they should not be your first poles and stems from a few different reasons. In my personal experience I found people new to trekking poles have accidents when first starting out, and I've had several accidents with my poles. I stepped on them while taking some pictures and bent my aluminum poles. I have tripped over them while walking down the trail and nearly fell off the trail. Finally, I have lost a pair somewhere along the trail. Any of these things could spell disaster for these carbon fiber poles.

Overall, there are times when I would want to use them in some snow and want to have a larger basket. I got these on sale at REI for $110 and I see that price at places on the internet. I'm hoping that I get years of enjoyment from my poles and that I never leave them behind on the trail. But if I do someone will be very happy because these are excellent poles.

In 2024 they retail for $140 and they have tiny baskets.

Switchback Steve