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Gear Review: Mountain Hardwear AC Long Sleeve Men's Henley

Context

Spending any significant amount of time outdoors requires a selection of versatile clothing that can be stripped, layered, or adjusted at a moment's notice. (This is doubly true where I live in Seattle, where the weather is infinitely changeable and rarely kind.) With that condition in mind, I field-tested the MHW AC Henley on a backpacking trip in the high desert of eastern Washington—a place where thundersnow is as likely as a hot, dry day this time of year.

The first thing you notice about the AC Henley is how ridiculously light it is. It feels like nothing at all, as though Mountain Hardwear had engineered a shirt out of paper towel. But don't be fooled: the shirt can take some abuse, and with the sleeves down is a whole lot warmer than it looks.

The second thing you notice is probably the color. Get this shirt in "State Orange" and you will never misplace it, ever.



Pros

If you're a little thicker than the average long-distance hiker, like I am, it can be hard to find hiking clothes that fit well AND perform well. The AC Henley met both of those conditions for me. It's got plenty of room around the middle even in a regular size L, and while it does taper off at the hem, this mostly just makes for a convenient way to tuck it into shorts or long underwear. I turned it into a base layer under a short-sleeved performance shirt once I got settled in at my campsite, and I never got the uncomfortable "doubled" feeling that you often find when you layer activewear.

The AC Henley fit well to my body and was extremely comfortable without being tight or restrictive. It held up well against the chill of the desert evening, and only started to show its thinness when the wind picked up in the canyon.

Overall

I'd definitely recommend the Mountain Hardwear AC Henley to a friend looking for a base layer. (I wish I'd had it with me on my PCT thru-hike, as it proved itself far superior to the generic base shirt I was carrying.) If you're not going somewhere particularly wet or windy, it will serve well as a regular outdoor activity shirt, too.